

Demonstration of a Scalable Breast Health Care Pathway: Experience from Botswana

Jhpiego and Collaborators*

OVERVIEW: It is estimated that 70% of BC cases are diagnosed late in Botswana and there are often delays to diagnosis and treatment. This initiative provides education on breast awareness and examination, as well as improving the patient journey from community to treatment by identifying delays, reducing the time at each stage, and improving quality of services.



Area of focus:

Educating patients & HCPs about ABC/mBC



Target population:

Women aged 35–50 from the Good Hope District in Botswana



Breast Health

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women, with more than 2 million newly diagnosed in 2018, and is the leading cause of cancer deaths in women, with more than 626,000 deaths in 2018. Breast cancer is often diagnosed very late in low- and middle-income countries, which increases mortality rates. The World Health Organization promotes early detection to improve breast cancer outcomes and survival. To address this problem, we are:

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Objectives: Improve early detection and treatment of BC in Botswana by identifying and addressing health system barriers that prevent patients from progressing through the entire BC care pathway

Unmet needs addressed:

- Delays in patient presentation at a health facility after symptom onset, resulting in late-stage diagnosis
- Long wait times between first health facility visit and specialty cancer care

Key components:

- Training of HCPs in awareness communication, clinical breast examination and demonstration of self-exams
- Health education for the public, as well as clinical breast examinations by trained healthcare workers
- Referral, clinical assessment, imaging and staging, followed by treatment at an oncology treatment centre
- Tracking & navigation through the referral pathway, identifying delays and implementing corrective measures

Challenges:

- The global Covid-19 pandemic restricted education and awareness activities and limited the number of available HCPs. Limited laboratory and radiology capacity resulted in delays to testing results

Outcomes: The initiative has increased communication between healthcare facilities and resulted in standardised clinical guidelines for breast health throughout the country

Development: A team of 21 people from across the organisations work in collaboration with hospitals

Cost: >€30,000 (funded by Roche products)

Timeline: The initiative is scheduled to end in December 2020

Targeted to reach: 60–150

Based on written submission from Dr Amon Marwiro, Jhpiego Botswana, 2020. The Hard-to-Reach ABC/mBC Communities Toolkit was developed as a collaboration between Pfizer Oncology and the ABC Global Alliance, with funding and support provided by Pfizer. ABC Global Alliance members and Pfizer colleagues were invited to submit breast cancer community-based initiatives that address specific needs of underserved patient populations with advanced/metastatic breast cancer. Initiatives were evaluated against criteria determined by a steering committee with members from both Pfizer and the ABC Global Alliance. Initiatives were selected for inclusion in the toolkit to highlight best practices in addressing the unique needs of this patient population. All organizations who submitted their initiatives for consideration have provided permission for the initiative information to be included in the toolkit and shared publicly. Pfizer and the ABC Global Alliance bear no responsibility for the contents of the toolkit.