



Breast Cancer Screening at New Juaben Koforidua

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
EVENT DETAILS	2
SUMMARY OF EVENT	3
SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Event Details

Date: Saturday 3rd September 2011

Screening time: 9am-3pm (6 hours)

Purpose of Event: To create an effective breast screening program that will aid early detection and subsequent management of breast cancer disease in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

Primary Objectives: At the end of the screening, all attendees of the screening should be able to:

- Apply the principles and techniques of self-breast examination
- Identify signs and symptoms of breast abnormality
- Be examined to detect visible and/or tactile breast abnormality
- Breast cancer sufferers in need of chemotherapy/radiotherapy will be identified and finance provided where needed to assist with treatment.

Summary of Event

This breast cancer screening exercise was designed to give women an opportunity to be examined thoroughly by a physician as well as obtain present-day information on breast cancer and promoting its awareness.

Prior to the event, the team had the opportunity to meet the queen mother of New Juaben, who was welcoming and invited them into the palace. She shared a brief history of the New Juaben council and enlightened them on the most recent breast cancer screening in the area, which had taken place two years earlier (2009).

At the event, a brief history of the prevalence of breast cancer in Ghana was given, as well as the purpose of such screening in Koforidua. There was also an interactive talk, led by one of the founders of the JEAD foundation, on current breast cancer-related challenges being faced by young women in the developing world. These issues include gaining access to breast cancer treatment centres, dissemination of information, lack of skilled doctors and nurses and cost of treatment.

The incidence of breast disease/abnormality is on the rise, and what is shocking is the high tendency for patients with malignant tumors/disease to report very late to clinicians. It is indeed encouraging that the public is becoming more and more aware of the prevalence of breast cancer, yet there is still a significant proportion of people who do not take the time to examine themselves regularly.

It is clear that women presenting themselves with breast complaints are anxious about the possibility of being diagnosed with breast cancer. Koforidua Regional Hospital is one of the few institutions in the country that receives numerous numbers of such patients with breast cancer each year, yet it lacks the logistics to create a one-stop centre which calms people, sufferers and the general public, of their anxieties about the disease and reassures them that there is hope.

It is for this reason that screening outreaches are necessary in the region. The challenges are indeed many. That said, continual education and the dissemination of information is the key to succeeding in the early detection of this disease.

Overall we screened 90 women and one man. The team conducting the outreach consisted of the founders of JEAD Foundation, 5 specialist doctors, 11 nurses and 3 media reporters. Of the people screened, we had 8 suspects, with 2 showing definite signs and symptoms of breast cancer. We also identified 1 male candidate and 1 disabled attendee as suspects. Fresh fruits and purified water were served as light refreshments at the end of the screening exercise.

Patient management following initial suspicion of breast cancer generally included confirmation of the diagnosis, evaluation of the stage of the disease and the selection of therapy. Once the sufferer is identified, surgical tissue sampling is conducted to investigate and monitor the disease in the patient, and funds are provided where necessary for effective treatment.

The increase in turnout of participants is good news for breast cancer awareness and thus for JEAD. However, breast cancer remains a common and frequently fatal disease, the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women and the second leading cause of death across the globe. The age group that breast cancer affects most is that from 41-60 years.

Suggestions for Improvement

The challenges that arose during the outreach were few, namely getting some of the elderly people to the sectioned area where examination was taking place and assisting a disabled (crippled) attendee to undergo examination.

An idea was raised that we could delegate two people who will liaise with all the faith groups in the designated area prior to outreach in an attempt to increase the number of participants in future outreach exercises.

It also came to light that were a few participants who were uncomfortable because of the film crew and that we should seek their permission prior to filming them at future events. It was also suggested that we assure all participants that we will not show their faces in films and photos.

Other suggestions were to obtain banners prior to future outreaches publicizing their occurrence as well as to place posters at strategic locations with the dates and times of the screening programs publicized.

The consensus was that we had improved on our organization's structure and should aim to continue in the same manner.



JEAD FOUNDATION REPORT