

Proposal for Promoting Health-Seeking Behaviour on Cervical Cancer in Azar Community, Bauch State

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Abstract: *This article discusses the impact of community-based programs in enhancing health awareness, with a specific focus on a project aimed at promoting awareness and uptake of cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination. The project, led by Health and Development Alliance Limited HADAL, targets healthcare workers and the general populace, addressing the critical issue of cervical cancer, which is notably prevalent in Nigeria. It emphasizes the necessity of HPV vaccination and outlines the challenges in achieving high vaccine coverage, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. The multi-phase approach includes situational analysis, strategic content creation, and implementation involving capacity-building training, town hall meetings, and advocacy visits. This comprehensive strategy aims to increase knowledge and change attitudes towards cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination, ultimately contributing to improved health outcomes.*

Keywords: Cervical Cancer Awareness, HPV Vaccination, Community Health Promotion, Health Behavior Change, Public Health Campaigns

1. Executive Summary

Community-based programs, including sensitization campaigns, play a significant role in spreading information and raising awareness on different health-based issues most especially disease prevention and health enhancement in large populations (Seo and Lee, 2021). They enable to influence and change public opinion and behavior on an issue (Seo and Lee, 2021). This project focuses on health promotion and awareness creation about cervical cancer which has recently become a threat to the lives and health of all people across the world. The project majorly targets healthcare workers and the general public. The project is expected to yield various positive short-term and long-term outcomes concerning health and awareness about cervical cancer Screening and HPV vaccination.

Background of the organization

Health and Development Alliance Limited (HADAL) is a consultancy firm registered with the Corporate Affairs, Commission since 2023. Our programs include Health and Development Interventions including, Education, Peace Building, and Economic empowerment. The organization is aimed at improving the health and well-being of the general public. The organization primarily operates in line with the following values;

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Results-oriented
- Objectivity and Respect for diversity

Description of the problem

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is an extremely common virus that affects everyone – both women and men early in their sexual life and can cause six types of cancer, including cervical, vaginal, vulvar, anal, penile, and oral/throat cancers (Alsbeih, 2014). Globally, nearly one out of every four people men and women is infected with the virus and one woman dies every two minutes from cervical cancer

(Forman et al. 2012). Nigeria has a population of 60.9 million women ages 15 years and older who are at risk of developing cervical cancer (Anoruo et al. 2022). Current estimates indicate that every year 12075 Nigerian women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 7968 die from the disease (Anoruo et al. 2022). It was projected that by the year 2025, the cervical cancer death in Nigeria would rise by 63% and 50% among women of 65 years and below and 65 years and above respectively (Ferlay et al. 2018). Cervical cancer ranks as the 2nd most frequent cancer in Nigeria and the 2nd most frequent cancer among women between 15 and 44 years of age (Adebamowo et al. 2017).

Fortunately, an established, safe, and effective vaccine that provides long-lasting protection against HPV cancers is available, serving as a vital tool in broad cancer prevention (Small et al. 2017). HPV vaccination was recommended in 2006, for everyone aged 9 to 26 years and for some people aged 27 to 45 years (Anoruo et al. 2022). To date, more than 270 million doses have been administered worldwide and, DNA research comparing pre-vaccine and post-vaccine era samples shows HPV infection rates have dropped in the United States since the vaccine's introduction (Adebamowo. Et al. 2017). However, not enough people are receiving this life-saving cancer prevention method as uptake remains significantly lower in most developing countries. HPV vaccination coverage in Nigeria has been slow and lower than the national target (Anoruo et al. 2022). This project seeks to address some of the factors contributing to low vaccine uptake including misinformation, and vaccine hesitancy.

Brief description of the project

The project will provide a comprehensive capacity-building, awareness campaign, and advocacy program to promote Health seeking behavior on cervical cancer in the Azare local government

Project Rational

This intervention aims to empower healthcare workers and members of the community with the necessary information and skills for effective service delivery and to make

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informed decisions respectively, regarding cervical cancer screening and the HPV vaccine.

Aim: To design, implement, and evaluate an intervention to create demand, improve access, and increase uptake of cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccine in Azare community

Objectives:

- 1) To build the capacity of health workers on cervical cancer screening, and HPV vaccination to provide quality services
- 2) To build the confidence of health workers to discuss and effectively communicate the benefits of cervical cancer screening, and the HPV vaccine
- 3) To sensitize communities and improve their knowledge, attitude, and practice on cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination
- 4) To monitor and evaluate the progress and the effectiveness of the project.

Target audience:

Our program will target diverse populations, including:

- Healthcare workers (Doctors and Nurses).
- Policy and Decision makers
- Traditional and Religious Leaders.
- Civil Society Organizations
- The Media
- Students and young adults in educational institutions.
- Market communities and other informal groups.

2. Scope of Work

The scope includes planning and delivering a comprehensive awareness and information campaign over five (5) weeks. The implementation will be in three (3) phases as follows:

Phase 1: Situational analysis: This is a preparatory visit that will be conducted three weeks before the program implementation, to assess the current situation in Azare as regards cervical cancer and HPV vaccine, to establish a baseline, and to conduct stakeholder engagement.

Phase 2: Strategic Content Creation workshop: this will take about three weeks, it is the period of developing training materials and incorporating the information and data obtained during situational analysis.

Phase 3: This is the main implementation week and the activities involved are as follows:

- 1) Awareness creation (Capacity building trainings and town hall meetings)
- 2) Advocacy visit

- **Capacity building training:** This is a three (3) days interactive training workshop to educate healthcare workers on various cervical cancer, HPV vaccine, and behavioral science topics. This will enhance quality service delivery and effective communication to create demand.

- **Town hall meeting 1:** This is a slide presentation meeting to educate traditional and religious leaders and create their awareness on cervical cancer and HPV vaccine. This will increase the leaders' efforts to promote cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccine

- **Town hall meeting 2:** also a slide presentation meeting to sensitize the media and the CSOs on cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccine and to prep them on appropriate messaging.

- **Community mobilization:** this involves the consultant's visitation to schools and marketplaces and also the utilization of various communication channels (social media, posters, flyers, local media CSOs, and traditional and religious leaders to disseminate cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccine information to the general public.

- **An advocacy visit** will be conducted to policy and decision-makers at the state and LG levels to create awareness on cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccine and to seek their commitment to incorporating HPV vaccine into routine immunization. This is to improve access to cervical cancer services.

For Better Understanding, Please Refer to the table Below:

Activities by Project Objectives

Objective 1:	Target population	What to do	Strategy
To build the capacity of healthcare workers on cervical cancer screening, and HPV vaccination to provide quality services	70 nurses and 30 doctors from public hospitals and primary healthcare centers	To Increase their general knowledge of: 1) Cervical cancer and the screening procedure 2) HPV Vaccination procedure and eligibility 3) The different methods of vaccination such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House to house Vaccination • Hospital-Based Vaccination • School-Based Vaccination • Workplace vaccination • Medical Outreach 4) Timely monitoring and evaluation of cervical cancer related services for accurate implementation and to assess progress	Lecture Presentation Role-play Group exercise
Objective 2:	Target population	What to do	Strategy
To build the confidence of health workers to discuss and effectively communicate the benefits of cervical		To educate the healthcare workers on behavioral science, to build their communication skills: 1) To reduce HPV Vaccine Hesitancy due to Confidence Complacency Convenience 2) To dispel HPV Vaccine Misinformation 3) To Introduce them to effective communication	Lecture Presentation Role-play Group exercise

cancer screening, and HPV vaccination		strategies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivational interview • Focus group discussion • Use of signs and symbols • Use of videos and pictures • Health education during waiting times, etc. • Sending accurate information via text messages • Use of local language and selection of easily understandable words 	
Objective 3:	Target population	What to do	Medium of communication
To sensitize communities and improve their knowledge, attitude, and practice on cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination	Policy and decision-makers 20 Traditional rulers 20 Religious leaders 10 representatives of CSOs 10 representatives of the Media School communities Market communities etc	To educate them on the following <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Causes of cervical cancer 2. Risk factors 3. Susceptibility 4. Prevention 5. Benefits of HPV vaccine 	School and market communities through Consultants TV, Radio, & Social media through CSO & the Media Mosques and churches through Religious and Traditional leaders Hospital patients through Healthcare workers

Deliverables

#	Milestones	Description	Duration	Location of work
1	Submission of the detailed work plan for the project	An excel document	First day of phase 1	Azare
2	Provision of progress report (financial and narrative) on successful program implementation	4 to 5 pages summary of all activities and progress made so far	On the last day of Phase 3	Azare
3	Provision of final report and presentation of findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 hard copies • 1 soft copy stored in a flash disk 	Three weeks after the completion of Phase 3	Azare

Time frame

#	Activity	Number of Days	Dates	Location
1	Situational analysis	4	17-21 December 2023	Azare
2	Development of training materials	17	25 th December 2023 -11 th January 2024	Abuja
3	Main implementation	6	14 th -20 th January 2024	Azare
4	Submission of final report and presentation of finding		12 th February 2024	

Measurable outcomes

- 1) Increased healthcare workers knowledge on cervical cancer screening, & HPV Vaccination
- 2) Increased healthcare workers' knowledge of behavioral change communication (BCC)
- 3) Increased CSOs and the media knowledge on cervical cancer screening, & HPV Vaccination and appropriate information to disseminate
- 4) Commitment by policy and decision-makers to incorporate the HPV vaccine into the routine immunization schedule
- 5) Increased willingness of the general public to accept HPV Vaccine

Measurement and Evaluation:

Monitoring will commence from the start of the program using the appropriate M&E tools to establish good implementation practices and to make informed decisions when necessary to ensure that project implementation is according to plan. Pre- and post-training and campaign surveys will be carried out to assess changes in the knowledge of healthcare workers and the general public on cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the project undertaken by Health and Development Alliance Limited HADAL represents a significant step towards mitigating the impact of cervical cancer in Nigeria through comprehensive education and advocacy. By targeting healthcare workers, policy-makers, and the community at large, the initiative not only spreads vital information about cervical cancer and HPV vaccination but also addresses vaccine hesitancy and misinformation. The multi-faceted approach, encompassing capacity building, sensitization campaigns, and stakeholder engagement, is pivotal in fostering a more informed and health-conscious society. The expected outcomes, including increased knowledge and uptake of cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination, signify a positive stride towards improving public health and combating one of the leading cancer threats among women. This project sets a precedent for similar health initiatives and underscores the importance of community-based programs in driving significant health improvements.

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