

## Community drivers of breast cancer advancements: Case of test and treat intervention in Busia County-Kenya

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**Introduction:** Breast cancer is among the most common cancers in Kenya with approximately 6,000 new cases and 2,500 deaths per year, most of which present at advanced stages. Early detection combined with effective treatment can achieve survival probabilities of 90% or higher. The Kenyan Ministry of Health (MOH) is committed to reducing cancer mortality, as evidenced by policies such as the National Cancer Control Strategy (2017–2022). Although there are many Kenyan organizations devoted to this task, effective coordination is lacking resulting in inefficient and overlapping expenditure of resources. At community level, misconceptions and stigma surrounding cancer etiology, prevention, screening and treatment have emerged increasing late detection and delays in early treatment.

**Methods:** KMET in collaboration with Busia County Government, Department of Health and Stanbic Bank Foundation conducted a cancer prevention project dubbed Test & Treat with the aim of reducing the overall incidences, early diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer with HPV vaccination drive in 5 Sub Counties. The approach was through outreach base, incorporating cancer awareness creation sessions by use of Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) to increase self-examination, screening and treatment at the community level.

**Findings:** Throughout the period of June-August 2022, a total of 917 women were reached with cancer awareness messages especially breast cancer, 453 women examined and 20 referred for further examinations and treatment in government facilities.

**Recommendations:** Engage community leaders to identify and break key drivers of stigma during community awareness; develop culturally appropriate messages to address knowledge gaps on breast cancer; work with MOH for a coordinated referral systems from the community to facility level and advocate for a National Health Insurance Fund that supports the most vulnerable women access breast cancer treatment.

**Conclusions:** Taking services to communities especially through outreaches ensures access to the most at need and reduces late diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer.

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## Biography

Caroline Nyandat is Sexual and Reproductive health expert and advocate with over 13 years' experience in women's rights and health. As a nurse health care manager, sociologist, trainer, mentor and service provider she has ensured effective implementation of Integrated Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights in 23 counties in Kenya focusing on women as the central point of care. Currently as a program Associate at KMET she coordinates implementation of Reproductive, Maternal Neonatal and Adolescent Health interventions in 23 counties in Kenya through county and community partnerships. Her passion has been having adolescent girls and women of reproductive age being integral and central to access friendly services using various innovations.

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