Developing a New Frontier for Cervical Cancer Treatment in Botswana

TogetHER Webinar Series

4th February 2021
Background – Botswana and Cervical Cancer

- Population of around 2.2M
- Adult female HIV prevalence 27.4%
- Cervical Cancer leading cause of cancer-related deaths among women
- National HPV vaccination roll out
- Current screening and Treatment Options Available
  - PAP smear
  - Scaled up VIA
  - Introduced HPV Testing
  - Cryotherapy
  - LEEP
  - Introduced Thermal Ablation

HIV/HPV Co-infection among adult (30-49yrs) women in Kweneng East, 2017 - 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HPV +</th>
<th>HPV -</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIV +</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV -</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>449</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>1019</td>
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Program Overview

- **2015-2020**: Scale up of Secondary Prevention Services (screening with VIA, and treatment with Cryotherapy & LEEP)
- **2015-2020**: Training of service providers and training of trainers (TOTs)
- **2015-2020**: Development of M & E framework, data collection and reporting tools.
- **2017-2018**: HPV testing acceptability and feasibility study.
- **2018-2019**: Introduction and scale up of HPV testing
- **2019-2020**: Introduction of Thermal Ablation
Number of women screened for cervical cancer for the first time in Botswana, 2016 – 2020

- 2016: 11,012
- 2017: 27,810
- 2018: 45,959
- 2019: 69,133
- 2020: 75,788
Service interruptions

Challenges Cryotherapy treatment
   › Frequent breakdown of cryo machines
   › Bulky nitrous gas cylinder - unable to carry it to mobile services
   › Low treatment rate

Challenges with single visit approach (same day treatment)

Solution: Introduce thermal ablation to improve access to screening and treatment
Meeting benchmark (5-25% for VIA positivity rate, <1% for suspect cancer)

Not meeting benchmark (<30% large lesions referral rate, >90% of eligible women should be treated)

Program recorded low same-day treatment rate, 2015-2020

- Total VIA Screened (2015-2020) 60,985
  - VIA Positive 4,913 (8%)
    - Eligible for Cryotherapy 2,742 (56%)
      - Treated with Cryotherapy same day 1,897 (69%)
      - VIA + Women, not treated with Cryotherapy same day (Postponed) 845 (31%)
    - VIA + Women, not treated with Cryotherapy same day (Postponed)
      - Clinical Suspicion of CXCA 391 (0.6%)
        - Large lesions 2171 (44%)
        - Linked for LEEP Service
    - VIA Negative 55,621

Program recorded low same-day treatment rate, 2015-2020
**ABLATIVE TREATMENT**

**Cryotherapy**
- Freezing process that destroys cervical precancerous tissue

**Thermal Ablation**
- Heating process that destroys cervical precancerous tissue
Introducing Thermal Ablation in the Botswana National Cervical Cancer Prevention program
Journey to Adoption and Use in Botswana

NCCPP Strategy 2017-2021
Program Planning Meeting
National Advocacy (2019)
Coming to Consensus (2020)
Adoption and use

Including the use of thermal ablation in NCCPP Strategy
Engagement from TogetHER for Health for thermal ablation introduction and funding
Reconsideration and re-engagement with key stakeholders referencing the new WHO Guidelines
Introducing and training of providers to perform the thermal ablation procedure
Facility level mentorship
SMART Advocacy Approach

Phase 1: Building Consensus
• Decide who to involve; set clear change objective and identify the decision maker

Phase 2: Focus Effort
• Review context, know decision maker and determine the ask

Phase 3: Achieve Change
• Develop a plan, set benchmarks for success and implementation

Engaged, Focused & Trusted
Key Outcomes of Advocacy

› NCCPP has adopted thermal ablation
› Updated national guidelines, data collection and reporting tools to include thermal ablation
› Service provision at the 4 roll out sites
› CDC Buy-in: Procurement of 39 machines
› Distributed machines to additional sites
Screening and Treatment in the four selected facilities

Number of Women screened positive for cervical precancer lesions and treated with thermal ablation, Jun-Sept 2020

- **188** Women screened
- **118** eligible for thermal/cryo
- **70** Treated with thermal ablation
- **35** eligible for LEEP
- **51** Treated with cryotherapy

*Overall treatment rate 72% (43% through thermal ablation)*
Number of people treated with thermal ablation by site from Jun-Sept 2020 (n=51)

- Thamaga: 25 people
- Area W: 14 people
- Bontleng: 7 people
- PPH: 5 people
Takeaways

Successes

• Leadership by an influential person, NCCPP Program Coordinator, as messenger and champion

• On-site training
  › 2-day training
  › At most 4 people at site; in line with COVID-19 guidelines

• Positive feedback from providers & clients
  › Need for continued equipment performance monitoring beyond project

• Small grant played a catalytic role
  › Host meetings
  › Procured four additional thermal ablation machines
  › Support training and mentoring providers

Challenges

• Delays in procurement of thermal ablation machines

• COVID-19 pandemic
  › Fewer clients
  › Modified activities to complete the deliverables
Thank You