



AWACAN-ED

African aWAreness of CANcer
& Early Diagnosis

Sharing the latest news from the AWACAN-ED programme

Hello and welcome to the July 2024 AWACAN-ED Newsletter. The first half of 2024 has been a very busy time for the programme and we hope you enjoy the updates below on our Research and Capacity Building activities, as well as team updates.

AWACAN-ED is an NIHR-funded Global Health Research Group that builds on the previous African Women Awareness of CANcer (AWACAN) project. AWACAN-ED started in October 2021 and runs for 4 years. The team includes a multidisciplinary group of researchers from South Africa, Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom working together with collaborators to improve care-seeking and address barriers to early cancer diagnosis in Southern Africa. The programme focuses on cervical and breast cancer in women and colorectal cancer in both men and women. Via our twice yearly newsletters we aim to keep everyone involved and up-to-date with the latest activities and news.



Research Update

All of the Data Collection for Workstream 1 is complete now and consisted of the following 3 elements:

1. Cross-Sectional survey where we reached 91% of our recruitment target with 1032/1134 breast, cervical and colorectal cancer patients recruited in South Africa and Zimbabwe

2. Health Facility Assessments in South Africa and Zimbabwe where we surveyed 22 Primary care and 12 Secondary/Tertiary care facilities
3. In-Depth Interviews with 56 healthcare workers in South Africa and Zimbabwe

Sincere thanks to the field teams and our collaborators. The analysis of this extensive and rich body of data is currently well underway.

Work is also well-underway on Workstream 2 in the following areas:

- A systematic review of mHealth tools for public use
- Review of current national guidelines for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer in South Africa, Zimbabwe and the UK
- Review of currently available infographics about breast, cervical and colorectal cancer in South Africa and Zimbabwe
- A series of workshops with groups of Clinicians and Community members to explore existing barriers to early detection of cancer and what tools or interventions could improve this situation
 - Shown below is an image from our Community workshop at the Macheke Clinic, Mashonaland East Province, Zimbabwe.



All of this input will be used to inform and guide the development of tools for both Primary care providers and the Community to enable earlier detection of cancer, which will be evaluated in Workstream 3.

Team updates

Since our last newsletter there have been some changes to the team:

- The team at Queen Mary University of London has two new members - Dr Kirsten Arendse and Jone Lurgain.
- Shameem Bray has joined the team at the University of Cape Town.

Welcome to them all!

Capacity Development Update

A core objective of AWACAN-ED is to strengthen research capacity in Southern Africa. The programme funds a number of studentships in Zimbabwe and South Africa and we are delighted to say that one of our Masters students at the University of Cape Town (Dr Sudarshan Govender) has completed his MPH (Epidemiology and Biostatistics). His thesis title was 'Awareness of cervical cancer risk factors and symptoms amongst individuals recently diagnosed with cervical cancer in South Africa and Zimbabwe'. Congratulations to Sudarshan who will be graduating in September and will also be presenting his research at the World Congress of Epidemiology 2024.

Since the last newsletter, three of our students have written blogs about their research which you can read on our website <https://awacan.online/>





AWACAN-ED Southern African School for Cancer Research

Planning is well underway for the 3rd AWACAN-ED Southern African School for Cancer Research which will be held in Cape Town, South Africa in September 2024. This School will build on the learning from the first two Schools and will offer participants the chance to share their research, get the latest updates on the AWACAN-ED research progress and also learn from members of our expert External Advisory Board via a series of Masterclasses. Look out for an update on the 3rd School on our News pages on the website and in the next newsletter.

Visit our website www.awacan.online and follow us on X (@AWACAN-ED) and Instagram (AWACANED)

This research is funded by the NIHR (GHRUG NIHR133231) using UK international development funding from the UK Government to support global health research. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the UK government.



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