

Health

Cervical cancer project launched

By Yaa Kuffour Senyah

A PROJECT aimed at integrating cervical cancer screening into HIV care among women in the country using advanced technology has been launched.

Dubbed: "Implementing Cervical Cancer Screening for HIV Women in Ghana", the initiative seeks to ensure timely screening and treatment of cervical cancer for women living with HIV during routine clinic visits.

Facilitated by the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR), the initiative is expected to shift from the previous method of screening, which involved collecting samples from the cervix known to check for cells that could lead to cancer, to an integrated method.

This would address challenges faced by women in less-developed countries such as Ghana in accessing cervical cancer screening due to the demand for

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specialised resources and equipment.

The Principal Investigator, George Boateng Kyei, revealed this at the launch of the project at NMIMR in Accra last Wednesday.

Prof. Kyei explained that the pilot of the project would be targeted at about 3,000 women to serve as a reference and a framework for a future national programme.

He stated that a pilot of the project would be carried out in the Greater Accra Region at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital Infectious Diseases Centre, Central and Eastern regions respectively.

"So at the end of it all, we hope to provide evidence that cervical cancer screening can be integrated into routine HIV care if nurses are trained to take charge of the screening using validated and simple treatment protocols", Prof. Kyei emphasised.

For her part, the Director of the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy, University of Ghana, Dr Deborah Atobrah, stated that the initiative was significant in curbing the rise of cervical cancer in the country, particularly among women living with HIV.

She further expressed her

commitment to collaborate with the institute to ensure the successful achievement of the objectives of the project with the aim of integrating it into a national programme.

Partnership

The Programme Manager of the National AIDS/STI Control Programme, Ghana Health Service, Dr Stephen Ayisi Addo, indicated that due to the current situation of most women living with HIV and other STIs, they were mostly vulnerable to infections and other diseases such as cervical cancer.

Hence the introduction of the project was timely to screen them early and protect them from rising infections that would further deteriorate their health.

Dr Addo gave an assurance that the GHS would actively forge a partnership with the institute to gather evidence essential for crafting policies and guidelines to facilitate the seamless improvement in health service delivery.