Non-Communicable Diseases
It is increasingly being recognised that non-communicable disorders (NCDs), such as cancers, diabetes, cardio vascular disorders, as well as mental disorders, are on the increase, in sub Saharan Africa.
Non-Communicable Diseases

In 2001, WHO estimated that deaths due to NCD were 59% of all deaths globally. Another measure, the Disability Adjusted Life Year (DALY) which measures those who do not die, but live with a disability, estimated that 46% of the total DALYs globally were due to NCDs.
Non-Communicable Diseases

In Uganda it is estimated that about 30% of the adult population have High Blood Pressure (HBP) and that 80% of these people do know that they have the problem.
Non-Communicable Diseases
In addition, 80% of smokers who report to Mulago National Referral hospital have HBP and 50% to 60% of Out Patient Department patients (OPD) at the same hospital come because of HBP complications.
Non-Communicable Diseases
This worrying situation is attributed to mainly four factors namely: inappropriate diet; physical inactivity; tobacco use and; harmful use of alcohol.
Non-Communicable Diseases: Everyone to eat healthy foods, reduce salt intake, avoid tobacco use and harmful use of alcohol, control body weight, and above all, regularly check your blood pressure.
Communication: Why the media

• The mass media are important sources of information about health and health care
• This information can influence opinions and behaviour, including:
  • Willingness to present for care
  • Unrealistic expectations
  • Unnecessary alarm
  • False sense of security
NCDs and the Media

Media as a resource:
- Mobilisation
- Sensitisation
- Warnings
- Advocacy
- Information
- Education
- Advertisement
The rising trend of NCDs has not been widely covered in the media in and outside Uganda

Why the rising trend?
Life styles, alcohol, tobacco consumption

What should we do as the media?
Let us tell a good story

• Quality of the story and making the story interesting to the audience is important
• Quality of how it is told
  – Communicating the story well is also important
• “Scientific quality”: Informing the audience (and not misinforming them) is also important
Gaps in media coverage of NCDS

It is a new story
No policy
Limited demand in accountability
The role of failures within the response has not been highlighted
Limited Knowledge on NCDs: No data
Media has not succeeded in narrowing the knowledge gap on NCDs
A few experts and interest groups
What’s behind the problem?

• Promoting health is not an aim
• Competition
• Editors
• Sources
• Lack of training
• Lack of time
• Lack of space
Requirements for effective communication of NCDs

- Objective
- Zeal/passion/interest
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Tools
- Social responsibility
- Evaluation
Training needs

- Change of attitude

Partner at war not mere observer or reporter

- Motivation to venture into the science
- Nose for important story
Knowledge

- **Science**: terminology, data, concepts
  - Need to break it down/sometimes local words
- **Research findings**
  - Need interpretation and explaining

**TRAINING NEEDS**

- How to identify reliable sources of information
  - experts, relevant researchers, medical journals, internet, experience, reports, press releases, opinion leaders
  - You are not the expert; you are a medium of information
- How to identify vested interests:
  - sources, internet, publications, apologetics
Advocacy: It's a set of actions undertaken by a group of committed individuals or organizations to introduce, change or obtain support for specific policies, programmes, legislation, issues or causes.

It also aims to introduce or change a policy, programme, or legislation, or the position of influential individuals or organizations on a specific issue.
• The Media and Advocacy
• Follow committed individuals who are working on advocacy activities
• Identify partners
• Find out what is happening in the setting for the advocacy activities
• Provide a strong rationale for the need to increase attention to NCDs
• Increase awareness
• Write or broadcast stories that can influence the budget allocation process for NCDs
• Encourage changes in the way services are organized, regulated or directed
• Push for more attention to NCDs
• Try to write articles that will make NCDs a priority, create policy reform
• Try to draw the attention of policy makers
Thank you

Are you not a wonderful audience?