

The Media: a potent tool in health advocacy in the campaign against Non Communicable diseases

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Non communicable diseases

- NCDs- 'the big four' (cancers, CVDs, diabetes, ARIs)
- NCDs will be the leading cause of death in low-income countries like Uganda by 2030. (WHO, 2012)
- The burden of cancer alone is set to double between 2008 and 2030 (World Bank, 2013)
- Contrary to perceptions, 80% of world's NCD burden is in LMIC. These are not necessarily 'diseases of the rich'.
- Until recently, health communication has been focused on issues like HIV, malaria and maternal health.

Why the rise in NCDs in Uganda?: A hypothesis.

- Westernization and change in nutritional regimes.
- Rise in incomes and recreational diets typically comprising roast pork and beef.
- Excessive sedentary use of motorized transport.
- Adapting from physically-active rural background to urban middle class lifestyles.
- African culture associates being overweight with affluence.
- Late detection and low diagnostic capacity.

A call to arms for journalists

- Raising public awareness in Uganda (epidemiological shift to NCDs)
- Advocating for behavior change in life-styles .
 - (Tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, salt intake)
- Getting NCDs on policy agenda (policy & programming)
- Connecting the dots (High profile deaths are all due to NCDs)
- Early detection is key(IEC- Info, Educ & Comm)
- Potent tool for health advocacy against 'silent killers'.

A call to arms.. Cont'd.

- Communicating research findings in a simple, user-friendly way.
- Media part of prevention strategy, an economical and cost-effective response to NCDs.
- By time of diagnosis, 80-90% of cancers are incurable.(WHO-AFRO, 2013).
- NCDs require a response from all sectors and not just the Health sector.
- Physical and social environments that promote health.

Story ideas on NCDs

- High profile deaths mostly due to NCDs.
- Increasing cases of child-hood obesity
- The household economic burden of treating NCDs (kidney) diseases
- Recreational diets of pork and beef
- Fitness clubs such as 'hushers'
- Access to medicines to treat NCDs (patent barriers)

Information sources for journalists

- WHO <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs355/en/>
- World Bank 2013 Report on NCDs in SSA.
- Dr Gerald Mutungi – NCD Program Manager, Ministry of Health.
- Dr John Omagino, Head Uganda Heart Institute
- Dr Jackson Orem, Head Uganda Cancer Institute
- Dr William Lumu, President Uganda Diabetes Association
- UNTCA and CEHURD

Thank you!

- We are ready to help you to tell this story.