

Improving Cancer Awareness and Knowledge in Johannesburg and iLembe Districts through a Tailored Community-Based Educational Intervention

Buhle Lubuzo^{1,2}, Usangiphile Buthelezi^{1,2}, Zamasomi Luvuno^{2,3}, Hlolisile Chiya^{2,3}, Bridgette Goieman¹, Gwendoline Matlala¹, Meisi Nong⁴, Gugu Gigaba^{2,3}, Sibongile Ramotshela¹
1 AFIA TAI, **2** University of KwaZulu-Natal, **3** Genius Quality, **4** MFTM

INTRODUCTION

- **Cancer remains a leading cause of morbidity and mortality** globally, with persistent misconceptions and fears affecting screening behaviors.
- In SA, where healthcare system relies heavily on PHC to deliver essential services, enhancing community-based intervention is crucial for addressing cancer care disparities.
- As such, the Georgia Cancer Center’s c-CARE program was adapted for SA to address these gaps.

OBJECTIVE

- To **evaluate** the **impact** of a **tailored** educational intervention on cancer awareness and knowledge among **adults in Johannesburg and iLembe** districts.

METHODS

- c-CARE program was adapted targeting traditional health practitioners, community health workers, and faith-based leaders.
- A quasi-experimental pre-post design using structured surveys with 210 participants (151 females and 59 males) with a median age of 48 and 51, respectively.
- Many participants had secondary or higher education (90.7% females and 74.6% males, $P < 0.001$).
- Data were collected using REDCap and analyzed with Stata 13.1.

RESULTS

- Survey showed substantial improvements in cancer awareness and knowledge, along with positive shifts in attitudes toward cancer screening.
- Participants’ understanding of palliative care and mental health in cancer management also improved. However, fears about cancer diagnosis and screening were still persistent.

FIGURE 1: IMPROVEMENTS IN CANCER AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE POST-INTERVENTION

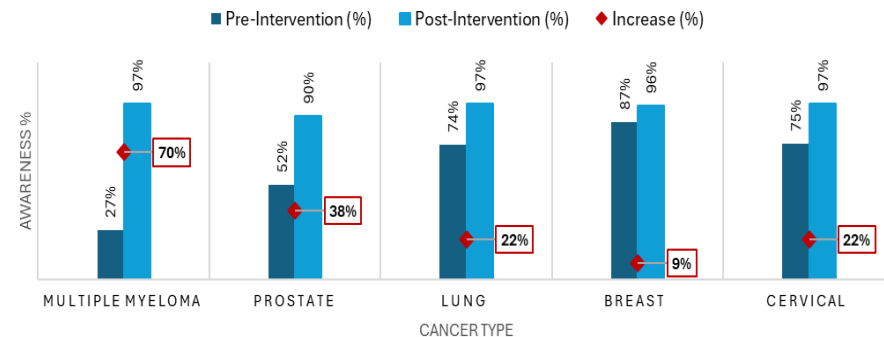


Figure 2: Community members proudly displaying their certificates after completing cancer awareness training.

CONCLUSION

- The study highlights the need for continued education to dispel myths and reduce fear around cancer screening.
- **Impact:** Engaging community leaders in cancer education helped overcome cultural and socioeconomic barriers that often limit healthcare information.
- **Recommendation:** Expanding community-based education to underserved areas can further boost cancer knowledge and early detection.
- Using local languages and culturally relevant examples will improve engagement, comprehension, and retention of health information.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors thank all participants, community health workers, traditional health practitioners, and faith-based leaders, for their active involvement and commitment to this study.