



UNITED TO END CERVICAL CANCER IN EGYPT

YEAR ONE REPORT (JANUARY 2025)

STRATEGIC GOAL

Rotary and partners are collaborating to support an evidence-based program to lead public awareness campaigns about cervical cancer prevention, and train health care workers to promote and distribute the vaccine in order to increase understanding about HPV and broaden the demand for vaccines and screenings. These efforts intend to lead to prevention, early detection and quicker treatment of HPV infections and cervical cancer. The program is based on the World Health Organization's global strategy that demonstrates that HPV vaccination, regular cervical cancer screening and prompt treatment of precancerous lesions can significantly reduce cases of cervical cancer and reduce mortality rates.

ROLE OF ROTARY

Rotary members engage with local communities, health professionals, government and media platforms to promote the importance of HPV vaccination and early detection. United to End Cervical Cancer in Egypt (UECCE) meets regularly with the Ministry of Health to discuss cervical cancer screening and vaccination uptake to inform decisions about a national cervical cancer prevention program, inclusive of HPV vaccine becoming part of the vaccine schedule.

PARTNERS

- Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population Presidential Initiative for Cancer Early Detection
- Egyptian Society of Colposcopy
- American University in Cairo

PROGRAM RESULTS

Outputs

- 310 gynecologists, pediatricians and nurses trained in screening and vaccine administration and patient education around cervical cancer prevention
- 360 female social leaders trained to deliver sensitive and culturally appropriate awareness training on HPV

and cervical cancer prevention

- 2,552 women screened for cervical cancer: 7.4% with abnormal tests results. 100% (188) of women with abnormal test results received treatment
- 22 medical centers equipped with supplies for administering HPV vaccines and screening patients
- 112 Rotary members trained to serve as advocates and promote vaccination and screening

Outcomes

- Program activities focus on changing perceptions about cervical cancer and creating demand for the HPV vaccine. Extensive social media and television campaigns inform the public by providing scientific information, dispelling myths and addressing barriers to vaccine uptake. Continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of awareness sessions helps the program refine actions to increase acceptance of the vaccine by parents and girls.

Sustainability

- The Ministry of Health joins UECCE in actively encouraging communities to participate in vaccination and screening. Their presence increases program credibility, helping to overcome vaccine hesitancy and misconceptions among community members.

Challenges being addressed

- Program data shows that parents are hesitant to vaccinate daughters against HPV because they are concerned about sterilization and overall vaccine safety.
- Securing permission to work in public schools was delayed due to strict government regulations and extensive approval process.
- There is skepticism in the medical community about the presence of cervical cancer and HPV in Egypt and thus need for HPV vaccine.

What We Learned

Parents are more likely to have daughters vaccinated if the opportunity to vaccinate is offered immediately after an awareness session or at a clinic close to home

University students, especially in the 18-20 age group, are ideal advocates for HPV vaccination and cervical cancer prevention. Their strong social networks allow for a peer effect, where they can influence their siblings and younger students to get vaccinated and take health seriously.

ART FOR AWARENESS

Through this program, student artists at Ain Shams University in Cairo created awareness about cervical cancer through visual art. The young artists began by learning about cervical cancer and its causes and symptoms, as well as the key to prevention: the HPV vaccine. Until then, none of them had heard about the disease. “Rotary introduced this disease to the students; nobody had talked about it before,” says Doaa El-Saati, an art professor at Ain Shams University. “The students were very excited and wanted to be vaccinated.”

After spending a few weeks brainstorming, they came up with concepts and began working with El-Saati to produce the works. “I was happy with the results, the excitement, and the energy of the students,” El-Saati says.



Image credit: Nada Mohamed, Maha Ahmed

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