

Uganda Breast Health Card



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Introduction

In Uganda, a fragmented healthcare system significantly hampers the continuity of care for breast cancer patients, with vital information often lost amidst poorly connected referral networks.

The Uganda Breast Health Card Initiative seeks to address these challenges by introducing a tangible, patient-centric tool designed to seamlessly record and track a patient's healthcare journey from diagnosis through treatment and follow-up.

Background

Breast cancer diagnosis in Uganda alarmingly occurs at late stages in over 80% of cases, attributed to systemic delays in early detection and referral.

Aligned with the Breast Health Global Initiative, this project embodies a resource-stratified approach to breast cancer care. It underscores the necessity of communication across care levels and adapts to local contexts, promoting a systematic and phased implementation of breast cancer guidelines.

Objectives

- **Improve Continuity of Care:** Establish a consistent record-keeping tool that enhances communication between various healthcare providers.
- **Promote Early Detection and Adherence:** Utilize the Breast Health Card to educate and encourage early cancer screening, adherence to treatment plans, and consistent follow-ups.
- **Educational Outreach:** Leverage partnerships with organizations like UWOCASO (Uganda Women's Cancer Support Organization) to educate healthcare workers and the community on the importance of breast health awareness.

Methodology

The design and implementation of the Breast Health Card involved iterative feedback sessions with healthcare providers across different levels. Initial consultations with Level III health workers, radiologists, and oncologists informed the card's content, focusing on usability and comprehensiveness. Subsequent feedback rounds refined the card, ensuring clarity, relevance, and ease of use in fast-paced clinical settings.

Challenges and Solutions

Cultural Barriers: The initiative addresses stigma and misconceptions about cancer in Uganda by incorporating educational efforts that destigmatize the disease and emphasize the importance of early detection.

Literacy Concerns: Adaptations were made to the Breast Health Card to accommodate varying literacy levels among community health workers, including the simplification of medical terms and the consideration of visual aids.



Feedback session with Level III health workers



UWOCASO community health educators

Sample pages from Uganda Breast Health Card

Uganda Breast Health Card

Always take this card with you when you go to a clinic with breast problems

If you see any changes in your breasts, talk to your VHT or doctor as soon as possible.

Remember! Breast cancer can be cured if found early

Your Local VHT contact

Your Local Health Clinic

UWOCASO volunteer, if applicable

Treatment

Surgery

Date (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Chemotherapy

Specify _____

Date Started (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Completed all treatment? Yes No

Radiotherapy

Completed all treatment? Yes No

Hormonal Therapy

Completed all treatment? Yes No

COMMENTS

Biopsy

Hospital Name

Date (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Type of Biopsy

Excisional (surgical) Fine Needle Aspirate (FNA)

Core Needle Biopsy From a mastectomy sample

Other Not reported

Pathology

Date sample received (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Date sample processed (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Hospital Name:

Results

Normal Benign Cancer

Subtype

ER: Positive Negative Not measured

PR: Positive Negative Not measured

HER2/neu: Positive Negative Not measured

TNM Stage

Stage 0 Stage I Stage II Stage III

Stage IV Not assessed

Diagnostic Imaging

Hospital Name

Date (dd/mm/yyyy) _____

Select imaging type

Diagnostic Mammography / Result

BI-RADS 0 BI-RADS 1 BI-RADS 2

BI-RADS 3 BI-RADS 4 BI-RADS 5

BI-RADS 6 Not reported

Ultrasound / Result

BI-RADS 0 BI-RADS 1 BI-RADS 2

BI-RADS 3 BI-RADS 4 BI-RADS 5

BI-RADS 6 Not reported

Future Directions

After piloting this initiative in one Level III health center, we aim for national integration and ongoing refinement based on feedback and evolving healthcare needs. Future directions include exploring digital adaptations of the Breast Health Card and expanding educational outreach to further reduce the stigma surrounding breast cancer in Uganda.

