

The HOPE (Helping Others through Personal Experience) Project

Breast Care International



OVERVIEW: In Ghana there is a lack of counselling available for patients with ABC/mBC and patients are often led to believe that it is not possible to maintain QoL while living with ABC/mBC. This initiative trains patients to become peer-to-peer counsellors, to help demystify BC and provide advice to patients with newly diagnosed BC or ABC/mBC.



Area of focus:

Peer-to-peer support groups or platforms for patients with ABC/mBC



Target population:

Patients with BC or ABC/mBC in Ghana

Objectives: Demystify BC by providing peer-to-peer counselling and helping patients navigate through their treatment. Give hope to men and women with ABC/mBC and improve their QoL while living with the disease

Unmet needs addressed:

- Lack of pre-/post-treatment counselling, including patient navigation through treatment
- No visibility of women living with BC – it is a common myth that women die 6 months after a mastectomy

Key components:

- Training of BC survivors to share their stories, provide peer counselling, and aid patient navigation
- Two survivors are permanently employed at Peace and Love Hospitals and 2–10 join BCI on outreach activities
- A special wing of the project providing counselling for patients with ABC/mBC from patients with ABC/mBC

Challenges: BC is considered taboo in Ghana and it was hard to find survivors who were willing to discuss their diagnosis – to overcome this, the initiative allowed flexible participation (e.g. some women only speak on radio shows). It was also difficult to obtain the funding to organise the training and to run the initiative

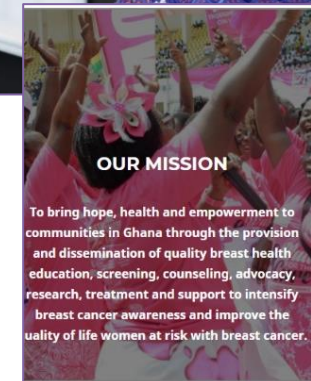
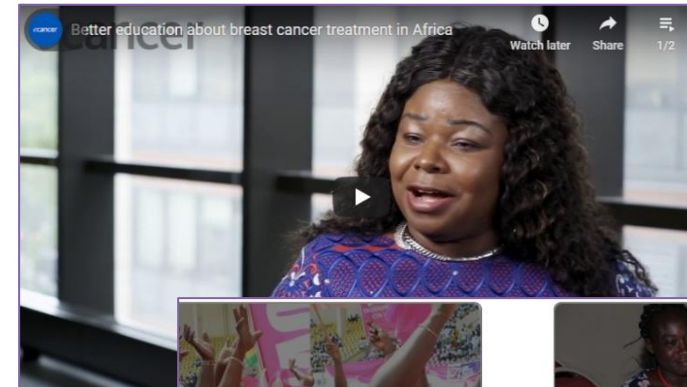
Outcomes: The initiative has reached 8 of the 10 regions in Ghana through outreach programs (and 2 regions permanently). It has increased the number of BC survivors to >800 in the Peace & Love Survivors Association PALSA

Development: BC survivors were trained by Rev Tam Denyse, a BC survivor from Carrie's Touch USA. Women were chosen from PALSA to participate in the training

Cost: <€5,000

Timeline: 7 years (2013–ongoing)

Targeted to reach: >300



For more information:

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Based on written submission from Beatrice Wiafe Addai, BCI, 2020. The Hard-to-Reach ABC/mBC Communities Toolkit was developed as a collaboration between Pfizer Oncology and the ABC Global Alliance, with funding and support provided by Pfizer. ABC Global Alliance members and Pfizer colleagues were invited to submit breast cancer community-based initiatives that address specific needs of underserved patient populations with advanced/metastatic breast cancer. Initiatives were evaluated against criteria determined by a steering committee with members from both Pfizer and the ABC Global Alliance. Initiatives were selected for inclusion in the toolkit to highlight best practices in addressing the unique needs of this patient population. All organizations who submitted their initiatives for consideration have provided permission for the initiative information to be included in the toolkit and shared publicly. Pfizer and the ABC Global Alliance bear no responsibility for the contents of the toolkit.

Ethnic, religious, indigenous/native populations and/or other historically marginalised groups	Younger patients	Older patients	Men	LGBTQ+ patients	Low health knowledge patients
Patients who lack an adequate caregiver or support system	Patients who mistrust conventional treatments	Low income patients			
Patients a long distance from a specialist centre	Patients with uncontrolled comorbidities	Mental health patients			