Recommendations from the Ouagadougou Regional Consultative meeting on Cervical Cancer prevention and control

Preamble

This consultative meeting was convened by WHO to review information on the epidemiology, diagnosis, treatment, control and prevention of cervical cancer in Africa, as part of the contribution towards developing a WHO/AFRO policy on cervical cancer prevention and control. The information to be obtained will also be used for the upcoming HPV vaccine session at the next meeting of the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE).

The global burden of cervical cancer cases makes it a very important public health problem particularly in worldwide, including the AFRO region. Most of the cervical cancer cases occur in women at an age when their role in the upkeep of families, economic activity and social cohesion of societies, including the provision of education and health needs of children is critical. In industrialized countries, expanded screening and treatment have dramatically reduced cervical cancer rates over the last 60 years while in sub-Saharan Africa, where more than 95% of women have never been screened, the death rate from cervical cancer continues to rise.

Participants of the Ouagadougou Regional Consultative meeting on Cervical Cancer prevention and control recognized the importance of Cervical Cancer prevention and control in the WHO African Region and called for urgent action to reduce this intolerably high burden of cervical cancer in Africa and to save women’s lives. The call recognizes that a comprehensive strategy, combining vaccination to prevent cancer, with screening and treatment programmes, will significantly reduce the threat of cervical cancer. It acknowledges that action will be required to give women and girls in Africa rapid access to such powerful new technologies as HPV vaccines and HPV testing. All of this will only be possible when there is a strong commitment and actions on the part of governments, multilateral agencies, the international donor community and development partners, health professionals and civil society.

The regional consultative meeting recommended the following actions:

All Countries
- Countries should muster political commitment, raise awareness about the burden of cervical cancer and (other means to) support the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy for prevention and control of cervical cancer and HPV-related disease in Africa
- To set up a National Coordination Committee for Cervical Cancer Prevention (NCCCP) which should includes representation from training institutions, cancer and non-communicable diseases control, sexual and reproductive health, immunization (Expanded programmes on immunization or national programmes on immunization), child and adolescent health and sexually-transmitted infections (STI) control.
- To encourage women groups in raising awareness of the burden of cervical cancer and the strategies for prevention and control.
- To share experiences and on available information, build capacity on the use of VIA/VILI and cryotherapy, as well as of other prevention strategies, including dealing with the challenges for scaling-up.
- To mobilize and allocate more resources for the prevention and control of cervical cancer.
TRAINING AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

- To adapt/strengthen cervical cancer prevention and control programmes in their curricula

WHO

- To advocate for scaling up visual inspection methods and introduction of HPV vaccines and, nominate Goodwill Ambassador to promote cervical cancer prevention and control.

- To actively disseminate research findings on the prevention and control of cervical cancer to country decision-makers.

- To provide guidelines and Terms of Reference (TOR) for the establishment of the NCCCP.

- To revise guidelines for standardisation of cervical cancer prevention and control programmes and for their implementation in the African region.

- To support national training workshops on the development and implementation of action plans for cervical cancer prevention, diagnosis and control involving health care professionals and programme managers training.

- To provide technical support for HPV vaccine introduction, in collaboration with other partners.

- To scale-up partnerships with UNFPA, UNICEF, GAVI, PATH and others for the promotion of applied research and surveillance to monitor the safety of HPV vaccines and their impact on cervical cancer trends.

- To support countries to negotiate with industry to obtain commitment to a negotiated affordable HPV vaccine prices for MoH or GAVI.

- To support MoHs in tailoring existing educational materials about HPV vaccines to the country’s local languages and cultural context.

- Provide countries with regional strategies for HPV vaccine introduction within existing cervical control programmes

- To write operational guidelines for decision-making and HPV vaccine introduction and uses that are consistent with and compliment with other WHO guidelines on good immunization practices.

Industry

- To provide adequate supplies of the new technologies at radically tiered prices for countries that decide to introduce HPV vaccines.

The concerned parties adopted the presented recommendations and have committed to unite and make every effort to reduce cervical cancer burden in the WHO African Region.