

Investigating the Impact of a Comic Book in Enhancing Cervical Cancer Education among Adolescents in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Background: Many women in Kenya and other developing countries die from cervical cancer, yet this cancer is preventable and one of the most treatable cancers when diagnosed early. Therefore, identifying interventions that address these preventable deaths is a crucial step in reducing global oncology disparities worldwide.

Approach: In 2019, Global Oncology (GO) created a comic book and video, which describe the disease process in cervical cancer and the importance of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine (<https://www.globalonc.org/on-the-ground-in-nigeria>). The GO comic book was distributed to over 5,000 students across twelve schools in Nigeria. A pre-post survey among 200 recipients of the comic book showed a significant increase in knowledge about cancer and cervical cancer. This illustrates the potential of the GO comic book and video to fill the cervical cancer knowledge and awareness gap.

Methods: This current research aims to investigate the impact and acceptability of comic-based educational materials on cervical cancer knowledge in primary schools in Nairobi, Kenya, where cervical cancer is the most common cancer among women. To do this, the research will compare knowledge before and after administering the comic book among 200 schoolgirls in 4 public primary schools in April 2023.

Conclusions: The pilot distribution and study of the GO comic materials will provide insights into the current level of knowledge among adolescent girls in Nairobi. It will also reveal existing myths associated with cancer in general, cervical cancer, and the HPV vaccine. These insights are helpful for future studies and for guiding the development of policies to address the high cervical cancer burden in Kenya. The comic materials also have the potential to create models for increasing knowledge about other diseases.

Funding provided by the Stanford Medical Scholars Fellowship Program and Global Oncology