

# GYNAECOLOGICAL ONCOLOGY SOCIETY OF NIGERIA

*Nigeria*



GLOBAL  
OVARIAN  
CANCER  
CHARTER  
a World Ovarian Cancer  
Coalition initiative

“As a young mixed specialty organization, we at the Gynaecological Oncology Society of Nigeria believe the Global Ovarian Cancer Charter is important for us and for all of Nigeria. Being a Champion of the Charter will allow us to better advocate for necessary improvements for women with ovarian cancer and curb the trend in our country and other lower resource countries.”



## GLOBAL PRIORITY

High level advocacy

..... CHARTER .....  
**CHAMPION**

## CHAMPION PROJECT: HIGH LEVEL ADVOCACY

The Gynecologic Oncology Society of Nigeria is determined that the widening gap between resource poor settings such as theirs and the developed nations must no longer impact on the care of women with ovarian cancer. To address this, they are launching a programme of stakeholder engagement.

Many women are unable to afford treatments or the complex diagnostic procedures to accurately determine how best they can be treated. In the poorest areas of the north of Nigeria, some 50% of those who come forward for help do not proceed with treatment because of the cost implications for them and their family.

In recent months, due to the Chemotherapy Access Partnership Program (CAP), a public-private partnership involving the Clinton Health Access Initiative, the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Health and others, some high quality chemotherapy drugs are now available at a lower cost, and stocks are replenished regularly, thereby avoiding large fluctuations in price, and patients choosing lower quality medicines. The scheme is currently operating in seven teaching hospitals.

The new high-level advocacy program will begin in early 2021 with the purpose of extending this vital access scheme to all tertiary hospitals in Nigeria, and making sure that cancer care is completely covered by the National Health Insurance Scheme. Issues of infrastructure development and skill acquisition will also be included in the discussions. Multiple members of the group will take part in meetings with national assembly members, local politicians, health boards, hospital administrators, and the National Health Insurance Scheme.

The Coalition chose to showcase this work because the clinical community have taken the lead to tackle important care issues head on with those with the power to change the status quo. Without representation at this level, change can be exceptionally hard to achieve.



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## INFORMATION & SUPPORT

Community  
Sensitization  
Programme

## CHAMPION PROJECT: COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION PROGRAMME

Within Nigeria there is the belief that a cancer diagnosis is a spiritual attack and is viewed as a death sentence. As a result, there is the popular belief that people should resort to religion-based or traditional medications if they wish to try to overcome cancer, rather than seek help from a hospital.

The Gynecological Oncology Society of Nigeria (GOSON) are committing to a programme of community sensitization, starting in early 2021. They will develop and pilot awareness programmes to dispel some of the myths about cancer and how it can be treated. Additionally, they will educate women about the signs and symptoms of gynecological cancers, including ovarian cancer, risk factors, and the importance of seeking early help.

Social and mass media outlets will be used to reach as wide a range of people as possible, but the programme will be supplemented by work on the ground, involving community mobilization, in those areas where advanced diagnosis and delayed presentation are most common.

The Coalition chose to showcase this programme because GOSON has recognised that their efforts to improve survival and quality of life have to be multi-faceted. In addition to their high level advocacy programme, data gathering and training, they recognise they must first begin to combat some of the myths surrounding cancers, and encourage women that seeking specialist help will help give them the best chance of survival.



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## DATA IMPROVEMENT

African Ancestry and  
Nativity as Factors in  
Ovarian Cancer Risk  
and Etiology

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**CHAMPION**

## CHAMPION PROJECT: AFRICAN ANCESTRY AND NATIVITY AS FACTORS IN OVARIAN CANCER RISK AND ETIOLOGY

Until very recently, most data on women who developed ovarian cancer in Nigeria was recorded on paper within each hospital. This new project, recently begun, will not only collect data from 22 tertiary cancer centres across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, but will use the data to determine the prevalence of hereditary ovarian cancer in black women, and determine the risk factors and risk conditions of epithelial ovarian cancer patients with or without hereditary ovarian cancer.

The work is being mentored by contacts at the University of Miami, and also involves the University of the West Indies, some Nigerian Universities (University of Calabar, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital), and the African Caribbean Cancer Consortium. This new group is working over the next three years to gather and input into a new database in the hope that it will help determine the nature of ovarian cancer in Nigeria and the Caribbean which will help influence policy and treatment decisions. Initially those involved in setting it up used WhatsApp, physical meetings and zoom meetings to get the group off the ground.

The Coalition chose to showcase this project because for the first time there is coordination and effort not only to collect national data in this lower middle income country, but to use it to identify important factors in relation to ovarian cancer in the community that could influence policy, testing and treatment strategies.



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