KENYATTA UNIVERSITY TEACHING, REFERRAL & RESEARCH HOSPITAL

THE CHECK UP

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KARIBU DR. ZEINAB GURA ROKA

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Contributors : Christine Karanja, Jimmy Dzuya,Gift Wachenje and Love Mwangi.

Quality Patient Centered Care

KUTRRH's NEW CEO

Dr. Zeinab Gura 'ndc' K
Ag. Chief Executive Officer

Dr. Zeinab Gura Roka is a distinguished healthcare professional with 18 years of experience in clinical practice, program management, and strategic leadership. With over ten years in senior management, she has driven transformative initiatives in the public health sector. Dr. Roka holds qualifications in Medicine and Surgery, a Master of Science in Applied Epidemiology, a Masters's degree in International Studies and advanced training in National Security and Strategy from the National Defence College, Kenya. She is a prolific contributor to healthcare knowledge with over 40 publications. Dr. Roka also serves on the boards of key institutions, including the Social Health Authority (SHA), the Kenya Nuclear Regulatory Authority and the Africa Field Epidemiology Network. She has also served in the Council of UMMA University. In December 2024, she joined Kenyatta University Teaching,Referral and Research Hospital (KUTRRH) as Ag. Chief Executive Officer, where her expertise and leadership will be pivotal in advancing Universal Health Coverage and strengthening health systems.

TISN CELEBRATES ITS 3RD GRADUATION- CLASS OF 2024

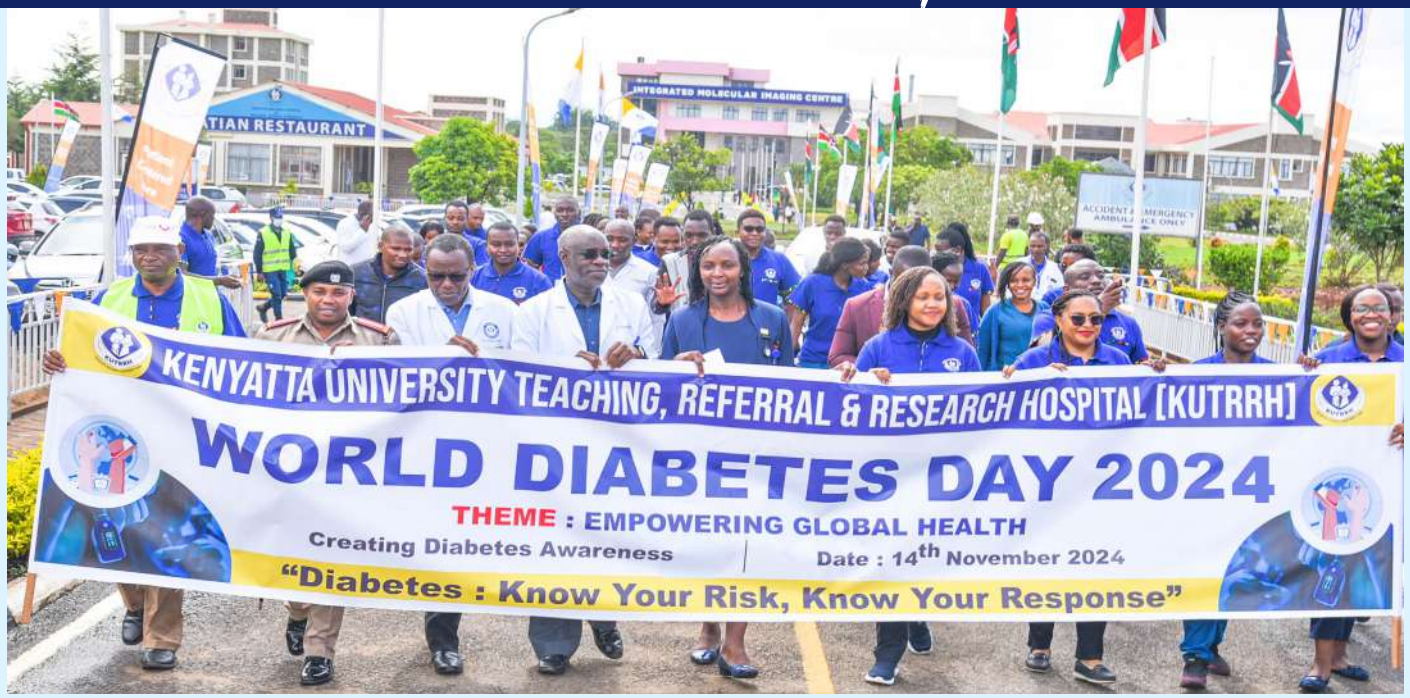
KUTRRH's Training Institute of Specialized Nursing (TISN) celebrated the 3rd Graduation of its Class of 2024 in an inspiring ceremony, that saw 39 Nurses graduate in various specializations: oncology, nephrology, critical care and perioperative nursing.

Healthcare leaders, faculty, families, and friends gathered to honor the graduates' achievements.
The event was graced by the **Cabinet Secretary for Health Dr. Deborah Mulongo Barasa** as the **Chief Guest**.

The Chief Guest noted the essential role of specialized nurses in achieving Kenya's Universal Healthcare. "Today's graduation ceremony symbolizes a promising future for healthcare in Kenya. Each of you poses the potential to shape the nation's healthcare landscape" she said.

''To the graduands, as you embark on this new chapter, remember that you are ambassadors of hope, health, and healing. The journey ahead may be challenging, but I am certain you will face it with the same courage, resilience, and dedication that have brought you this far.''
The graduation ceremony celebrated not only the accomplishments of the Class of 2024 but also the bright future they bring to Kenya's healthcare landscape. With specialized skills in areas like nephrology, critical care, oncology, and preoperative nursing, the graduates are well-prepared to make a profound difference in the lives of their patients and communities.

World Diabetes Day 2024



Every year on November 14th, the world unites to observe World Diabetes Day. This significant event aims to raise awareness about diabetes, its complications, and the importance of early detection and effective management. In 2024, the theme for World Diabetes Day is "Access to Diabetes Care."

The Growing Global Burden of Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus is a chronic condition characterized by elevated blood sugar (glucose) levels. It occurs due to insufficient insulin production by the pancreas or the body's inability to use insulin effectively. Insulin is essential for regulating blood sugar by allowing it to enter cells for energy. Without it, glucose accumulates in the bloodstream, leading to severe complications if unmanaged.

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) estimates that over 537 million adults aged 18 years and older are currently living with diabetes. This number is projected to rise to 643 million by 2030 and 783 million by 2045.

Common symptoms of diabetes include frequent urination, excessive thirst, unexplained weight loss, increased hunger, fatigue, blurred vision, slow-healing wounds, and tingling or numbness in the hands and feet (neuropathy). Recognizing these signs early is crucial for timely diagnosis and management.

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The Impact of Diabetes

Diabetes can lead to a range of serious health complications, including:

Heart disease: A leading cause of death among people with diabetes.
Stroke: A major cause of disability and death.
Kidney disease: Can lead to kidney failure and the need for dialysis or a kidney transplant.
Nerve damage: Can cause numbness, pain, and weakness in the extremities.
Eye damage: Can lead to vision loss and blindness.

The Importance of Access to Care

Access to quality diabetes care is essential for managing the condition and preventing complications. However, many people with diabetes, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, face barriers to accessing the care they need. These barriers include:

Lack of awareness: Many people are unaware of the symptoms of diabetes or the importance of early diagnosis.
Limited access to healthcare: In many parts of the world, healthcare services are scarce or inaccessible.
High cost of treatment: The cost of diabetes medications and supplies can be prohibitive for many people.
Stigma and discrimination: People with diabetes may face stigma and discrimination, which can discourage them from seeking help.

World Diabetes Day 2024: A Call to Action

World Diabetes Day 2024 is a call to action to address the global diabetes crisis. By raising awareness, advocating for improved access to care, and promoting healthy lifestyles, we can work together to reduce the burden of diabetes and improve the lives of millions of people around the world.

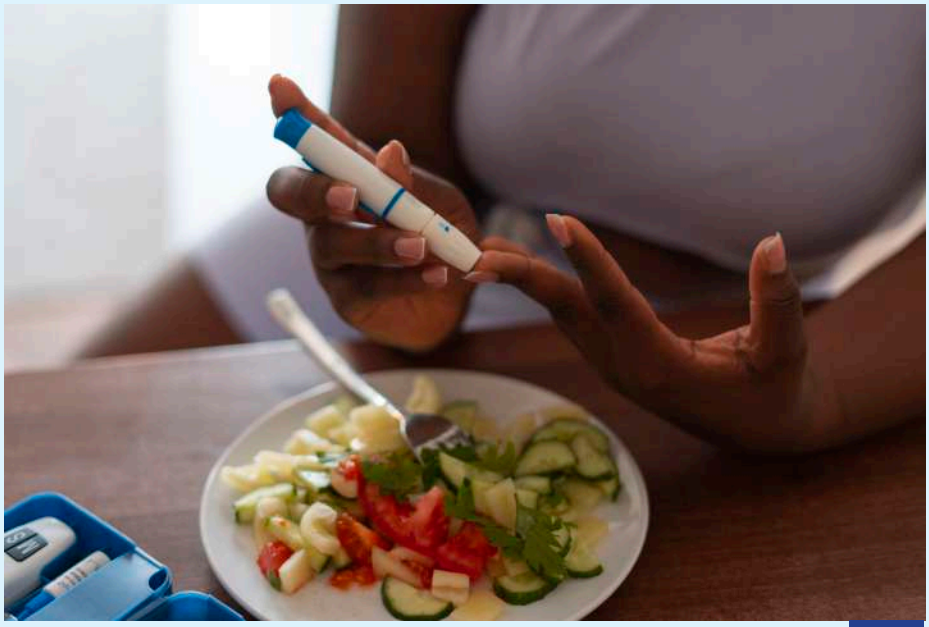
Key Messages for World Diabetes Day 2024:

Early diagnosis: Early diagnosis is crucial for preventing complications.
Access to affordable insulin: Insulin is a life-saving medication that should be accessible to all who need it.
Healthy lifestyle: A healthy diet, regular physical activity, and weight management can help prevent and manage diabetes.
Education and awareness: Educating the public about diabetes can help reduce stigma and encourage early diagnosis and treatment.
Let's join hands and work together to create a world where everyone has access to the care they need to live a healthy life, free from the burden of diabetes.

A Commitment to Diabetes Care and Prevention

Kenyatta University Teaching Referral and Research Hospital (KUTRRH) joined the global community in observing World Diabetes Day on November 14th, 2024. The hospital developed write-ups and a video to raise awareness about diabetes, promote early detection, and encourage healthy lifestyle choices.

World Diabetes Day serves as a reminder of the growing global burden of diabetes and the urgent need for effective prevention and management strategies. KUTRRH's efforts to raise awareness and provide accessible healthcare services are a significant step towards addressing this challenge.



World Prematurity Day 2024:

Introduction

Every year on November 17th the world marks the World Prematurity Day, a global initiative dedicated to raising awareness about preterm births and the challenges faced by preterm newborns and their families. The theme for the 2024 World prematurity Day was "Access to Quality Care Everywhere," highlighting the urgent need to ensure that preterm infants, regardless of where they are born, have access to life-saving interventions and specialized care.

At the forefront of this advocacy in Kenya is the Kenyatta University Teaching, Referral & Research Hospital (KUTRRH), a healthcare institution committed to improving neonatal outcomes. In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health (MoH), KUTRRH is spearheading initiatives to provide innovative, evidence-based interventions for preterm infants and their families.

In alignment with this mission, KUTRRH recently engaged in a strategic partnership with the Safaricom Foundation. The partnership aims to explore opportunities to advance patient-centered care. The Safaricom Foundation further demonstrated its commitment to maternal and child health by donating packs (gifts) for new mothers to enhance Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (RMNCH) services.

Understanding Prematurity: A Global and Local Perspective

Preterm birth, defined as birth before 37 weeks of gestation, is a global concern, with an estimated 15 million babies born prematurely every year. According to WHO, complications from preterm births are the leading cause of death in children under five years old. In Kenya, the Ministry of Health highlights that preterm-related complications account for a significant portion of neonatal deaths, emphasizing the urgent need for quality care.

KUTRRH, as a center of excellence in maternal and child health, is actively addressing these challenges through its Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). The hospital employs cutting-edge technology and a multidisciplinary approach to provide life-saving interventions.

(KMC): Encouraging skin-to-skin contact to stabilize preterm babies' temperatures and improve bonding with parents.

3. **Human milk banks:** Ensuring access to essential nutrition for preterm babies.

Dr. Jane Mwangi, Head of Pediatrics at KUTRRH, emphasizes, "Quality care is not just about survival; it's about giving every preterm baby a chance to thrive. We are committed to partnering with families, the Ministry of Health, and global bodies like WHO to achieve this goal."

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Visits KUTRRH

A team of experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) expert mission visited KUTRRH in November. The team was led by Prof. Tamer Sakr and Mr. Mohamed Swidan.

The IAEA is an international organization that works with over 164 Member States and many partners worldwide to promote safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy. It also promotes the exchange of scientific and technical information between them.

The experts were in KUTRRH to train the Radio Pharmacy team on the best practices to employ when discharging their duties. The five (5) day training went a long way in enriching the team with advanced technological knowledge and ensure world class health care provision to patients.

Part of their visit was also to explore collaboration opportunities. Strategic partnerships and collaboration with various stakeholders have been key in helping KUTRRH deliver Quality Patient-Centered Care to Kenyans and beyond.

PICTORIAL

KUTRRH's Acting CEO, Dr. Zeinab Gura (left) tours the hospital in the company of senior KUTRRH staff.

Staff members of KUTRRH's Accident & Emergency department during a team building exercise at Jagwani Camp - Sagana.

Members of PCEA-St. Andrews Church plant trees during a visit to KUTRRH over the 2024 Christmas season.

Dr. Mwirigi Kiula - KUTRRH's ICT Director talks to ICT staff during their 2024 end of year get together and tree planting exercise.

KUTRRH's Ms. Mellisa Mwangi briefs a guest at the KUTRRH exhibition stand at the Africa Connect Summit at Uhuru Gardens.

KUTRRH's customer service staff prepare to distribute gifts to patients during the customer service week-2024

WORLD ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE AWARENESS WEEK

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and no longer respond to medicines, making infections harder to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death. As a result of drug resistance, antibiotics and other antimicrobial medicines become ineffective and infections become increasingly difficult or impossible to treat.

Drug resistant infections cost more to treat, as reserve antimicrobials are not widely available and are expensive. These infections also lead to longer hospital stays, may require management in an isolation unit or critical care unit. They also have an impact on reduced productivity of those affected.

According to the Lancet, 1.57 million of 4.95 million deaths associated with bacterial AMR in 2019 and 27·3 deaths per 100 000 being from Sub-Saharan Africa. The six leading pathogens for deaths associated with resistance (Escherichia coli, followed by Staphylococcus aureus, Klebsiella pneumoniae, Streptococcus pneumoniae, Acinetobacter baumannii, and Pseudomonas aeruginosa) were responsible for 929 000 (660 000–1 270 000) deaths attributable to AMR and 3·57 million (2·62–4·78) deaths associated with AMR in 2019.

Some of the drivers of antimicrobial resistance are overuse and misuse of antimicrobials, unregulated dispensing of antibiotics/other antimicrobials, use of antibiotics in livestock production and farming as well as poor disposal of left over antimicrobials. There is a void in discovery and development of new antimicrobials and growing antimicrobial resistance to existing medications is a threat to public health.

A global action plan to tackle the growing problem of resistance to antibiotics and other antimicrobial medicines was endorsed at the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly in May 2015. This was endorsed by the Food and Agriculture organization of the United Nations (FAO), United nations Environment program (UNEP) and the World organization for animal health (WOAH) as well as WHO. One of the key objectives of the plan is to improve awareness and understanding of AMR through effective communication, education and training.

World AMR Awareness Week (WAAW) is a global campaign that is celebrated annually to improve awareness and understanding of AMR and encourage best practices among the public, One Health stakeholders and policymakers, who all play a critical role in reducing the further emergence and spread of AMR. To address AMR effectively, a One Health approach that considers human, animal, and environmental factors is key. This includes enhancing surveillance systems, promoting stewardship programs, and investing in research and development for new antimicrobial drugs. Public awareness, education, and international collaboration are essential for combating AMR and preserving the efficacy of antibiotics into the future. The overarching theme is:

World AMR Awareness Week 2024

Some of the ways to prevent rising AMR is judicious targeted use of antimicrobials and regulation of over-the-counter antimicrobial access (issued against a prescription from a registered health worker). Antimicrobials should be used as prescribed for the right indication, at the right dose, right timing and right duration. Leftover antibiotics should not be used nor shared with another person and these should be disposed- off properly. Good infection prevention and control measures, quality diagnostics and vaccines have a vital role to play in prevention and spread of infections.

WAAW is celebrated from 18th to 24th November every year. This year's theme is Educate, Advocate, Act Now. As a hospital, oversight of antimicrobial use is governed by the antimicrobial use policy, and this was launched on 20th November 2024. The AMS policy framework is guided by WHO's grouping of antibiotics into those that have a low risk of resistance, those with a high risk of resistance and thus should be watched and those to be reserved for use sparingly. The mandate of an antimicrobial stewardship program is:

1. Optimize the use of antibiotics.
2. Promote behaviour change in antibiotic prescribing and dispensing practices.
3. Improve quality of care and patient outcomes.
4. Save on unnecessary health-care costs.
5. Reduce further emergence, selection and spread of AMR.
6. Prolong the lifespan of existing antibiotics.
7. Limit the adverse economic impact of AMR.
8. Build the best-practices capacity of health-care professionals regarding the rational antibiotic use.

ESOPHAGEAL CANCER

KUTRRH has been conducting a research on Esophageal cancer in conjunction with Manchester University. The project began in 2022 following funding from the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR). The research studies Oesophageal Cancer, establishing the cancer spread in the country, its causes, and the best treatment for best outcomes.

The areas of focus for the project include:

1. Community engagement and sensitisation.
2. Early detection and screening using mobile endoscopy units.
3. Advanced molecular pathology to inform risk factors of oesophageal cancer.
4. Research capacity strengthening.
5. Training and capacity building of endoscopists, pathologists, and clinical fellows.

Although present-day therapeutic interventions of surgery, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy can positively influence disease prognosis, cancer of the esophagus remains a highly lethal disease in Kenya. Esophageal cancer is the fourth most common cancer with a fatality rate of 99.3% due to late recognition of symptoms by both patients and health care workers.

Most Esophageal cancers are discovered when they have become locally advanced and are due to a non-specific initial presentation like heartburn or abdominal bloating. Therefore, as few as one out of eight esophageal cancers are detected at an early stage.

What is esophageal Cancer?

This is a condition where cancerous cells develop in the esophagus, the tube connecting the throat to the stomach.

Esophageal cancer is an increasing health problem in Kenya especially in the Central and Western parts of Kenya with over 3000 cases reported in 2022 making it the fourth commonest cancer in the country.

Esophageal cancer can be squamous cell carcinoma or adenocarcinoma, affecting different parts of the esophagus.

Risk Factors and Causes

The exact cause of esophageal cancer remains unclear but several risk factors have been identified:

Dietary Factors: Consumption of very hot drinks and traditional fermented porridge which may contain carcinogenic compounds.

1. Tobacco and alcohol use.

2. Genetic Predisposition: Family history of cancer can increase risk.

3. **Infections:** Human Papillomavirus [HPV] and other infections have been associated with esophageal cancer.
4. **Environmental Factors:** Exposure to certain chemicals and poor socioeconomic conditions may also contribute.

Symptoms and Diagnosis

Esophageal cancer often presents with symptoms such as:

1. Difficulty and pain in swallowing [dysphagia] especially when consuming solid foods like meat, bread or raw vegetables can be a common early symptom of esophageal cancer. In advanced disease, swallowing semi-solids or even liquids become difficult.
2. Chest pain: Pressure or burning sensations in the chest may be experienced by individuals with esophageal cancer. Pain behind the breastbone or in the throat can also be a symptom of this condition.
3. Persistent hoarseness and coughing especially as the tumor progresses and affects nearby structures.
4. Indigestion and heartburn
5. Weight loss: This is often due to swallowing difficulties that hinder adequate food intake.
6. Vomiting.

Particularly if the vomit contains blood, can be a symptom of advanced esophageal cancer.

Other Symptoms may include frequent choking on food, bone pain [if cancer has spread to the bone]. Bleeding into the esophagus leading to black stools and anemia.

Esophageal cancer poses significant health risks and requires timely diagnosis through imaging tests such as CT scan, MRI, and PET/CT which provide detailed images of the esophagus thus detecting tumor spread. Endoscopic Ultrasound [EUS], Biopsy and molecular testing can also be done on a patient to determine what therapy options would work.

Treatment options for esophageal cancer in Kenya include; Surgery, Chemotherapy and radiotherapy depending on the stage of the cancer and the patient's overall health.

Preventive Strategies

Avoid risk factors like smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and maintaining a healthy diet.

Conclusion

By understanding the key aspects of esophageal cancer, individuals can take proactive steps towards prevention, early detection and appropriate treatment thus enhancing their overall health and well-being. Addressing this challenge requires a multi-faceted approach, including Public Health education, Improved healthcare infrastructure and policy support to ensure early detection and treatment due to its non-specific nature of symptoms.

Social Health Authority

KUTRRH
QUALITY PATIENT-CENTRED CARE

"SHA is designed to provide healthcare services from empaneled and contracted healthcare providers and healthcare facilities on referral from primary health facilities. The Social Health Authority ensures that every resident in Kenya can access a comprehensive range of quality health services they need without the burden of financial hardship."

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