



AHN Newsletter...

Welcome to the first edition of the AHN newsletter for 2008. This is a forum for news, updates, plans and ideas of and related to cardiac disease and its prevention in Africa and worldwide. We depend on input from all members of the AHN to ensure that this is a meaningful and relevant communications tool. We want to make this newsletter as informative as possible so please send your contributions to me and I will see that they are included in the next edition. Traditionally this newsletter is compiled by Public Relations students from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in the Communications Department at the Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa. Thanks to Azraa Dawood for help on this edition.

Upcoming events include the World Congress of Cardiology (see article on page 5) and World No Tobacco Day (31 May). It would be of interest to us all to be able to share experiences and plans so why not write something for the AHN newsletter? Photographs are also gladly received as pictures often give a clearer idea of what's happening.

Hope to see most of you in Buenos Aires - possibly at the AHN stand?

With best wishes

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Message from the President

Firstly I take great pride in welcoming the AHN's new Executive Secretary, Ms. Bola Ojo. I believe that she will prosper and be an invaluable asset to the AHN.

I am very excited about representing the AHN in Buenos Aires, Argentina at the World Congress of Cardiology from 18-21 May 2008. This year the AHN will have a table at the World Heart Federation's stand. Naturally, I am also looking forward to seeing old faces and the Congress presents the perfect opportunity to network and meet new and interesting people.

I am currently in discussions with Geneva about the AHN's Annual General Meeting (AGM), to be held in Maputo. I will be sending out a general letter with the finalised date.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind members that World No Tobacco Day is coming up soon (31 May). Members are encouraged to use this newsletter as a platform for updates on how you are creating awareness and what you are planning for the day.

Lastly, we have not yet received applications for the Health Promotion training in South Africa. The training focuses on educating crèche and school children. A Health Promoter from the Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa's Children's Programme will train the chosen applicants, equipping them with the necessary skills to implement a health education programme in their country.

I wish all members a successful 2008.

Regards

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Medical Brain Drain

More than 13,000 doctors who trained in Sub-Saharan Africa are now practicing in Australia, Canada, the UK and the US, according to a report by a group advocating the discontinuance of the brain drain of African health workers. Ghana spent US\$70 million training health professionals who then left to work in the UK, which in turn saved £65 million (US\$130 million) in training costs between 1998-2002, the report states. Countries that engage in the recruitment of African health professionals should help with training, building, and staffing new health schools and provide ways for health workers to stay in their own countries.

(<http://allafrica.com/stories/200802251511.html>)





WHAT'S HAPPENING!

Kenya

Health Workers Rheumatic Heart Disease Prevention Seminar

Even in the midst of Kenya's worst political crisis, the Kenyan-Heart National Foundation was still able to organise a one-day Health Workers Rheumatic Heart Disease Prevention Seminar.

The seminar, one of a series under the Pilot-Project in Nairobi Eastlands, was held on January 30th 2008. The Pilot-Project is funded by DANIDA, through a Collaboration-Twinning-Partnership between the Kenyan-Heart National Foundation and the Danish Heart Foundation. The seminar was attended by 48 health workers drawn from the Eastern, Western and Northern Districts in Nairobi Province. The health workers included nurses, clinical officers, doctors, officials from their Ministry of Health as well as their city council and training co-ordinators from their Provincial Medical Office.

The Kenyan-Hearts' ultimate vision is to eventually eradicate Rheumatic Heart Disease in the country. In collaboration with Kenya's Ministry of Health, one of their short term goals is to help set up Data Collection Systems at various health facilities to start with record-keeping of Streptococcal-Sore Throats, Acute Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Disease. The gathered data would help determine the seriousness and prevalence of the Heart Disease. By starting this exercise in their project area, Nairobi Eastlands, the data could lead to practical and realistic strategies on how to manage Rheumatic Heart Disease and more importantly how to prevent it.



Above: Elizabeth Gatumia CEO/Executive Director KHNF

The World Federation's website provides a global map (www.world-heart-federation.org/cardiovascular-health) that illustrates the number of deaths from Rheumatic Heart Disease Network (RHDnet), an "international resource to promote rheumatic heart disease control through the use of register-based secondary prevention" (www.worldheartfederation.org/about-use/scientific-advisory-board/rheumatic-heart-disease-network).

In February 2008, the Bulletin of the World Health Organisation published an editorial titled "Echocardiographic screening for rheumatic heart disease." It is openly available at www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/86/2/07-046680/en.

The authors (Eloi Marijon, Phalla Ou, David S Celermajer, Beatriz Ferreira, Ana Olga Mocumbi, Daniel Sidi, Xavier Jouven) call for more research into this disease, which "remains an obvious public health burden across the developing world," and the cost-effectiveness of preventative strategies. Their own research using echocardiography screening to detect subclinical rheumatic disease in Cambodia and Mozambique school children.

(Catherine Coleman, ProCor Editor in Chief)

Cameroon

Gender Influence on the Burden of Cardiovascular Risk Factors in Cameroon

The Cameroon Heart Foundation recently conducted an epidemiological study with the aim of estimating the gender influence on the burden of blood pressure (BP), obesity, blood glucose, heart rate (HR) and smoking habits amongst their urban population. The study revealed the increasing burden of cardiovascular risk factors in the African urban setting, with particular concerns for women with obesity and related disorders.

The study was a cross-sectional cluster sample population-based survey in five major administrative districts of Douala city in Cameroon. The total number of participants was 994 between the ages of 18 and 90 years, of which 554 were women. The sample group were screened for BP, weight, height, waist circumference (WC) and blood glucose. They were also given a questionnaire on socio-demographic parameters, smoking habits, history of hypertension and diabetes.



WHAT'S HAPPENING!

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The results were as follows: Age-adjusted Systolic BP was higher in men than in women (142+/-23 vs 137+/-24 mmHg, $P < 0.001$), while age-adjusted diastolic BP was similar in both genders (82+/-22 vs 80+/-17 mmHg, respectively, $P = 0.74$). HR was higher in women than in men (79+/- vs 75+/-12 bpm, $p < 0.001$). Although the prevalence of diabetes (random blood glucose > 200 mg/dl, or under anti-diabetic treatment) was similar in women and men (9.6 vs 8.2%, $p = 0.26$), age-adjusted blood glucose rate was higher in women ($p < 0.001$). Smoking rate was comparable in females and males (7.1% vs 8.4%, $p = 0.26$), while women had a longer history of smoking ($p = 0.02$). The body mass index (BMI) was greater in women than in men (29+/-6 vs 26+/-5 kg/m², $p < 0.001$) as was WC, a measure of central obesity (94+/-15 vs 89+/-14 cm, $p < 0.001$). Age-adjusted prevalence of obesity (BMI ≥ 30 kg/m²) was higher among women than men (38% vs 16%, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, age-adjusted central obesity (wc ≥ 80 cm for women ≥ 94 cm for men) was greater in women than in men. In a multivariate analysis, the increase in BMI and WC was associated with age, gender and the increase in blood sugar, BP and HR ($p < 0.001$).

These findings underline the urgent need for the implementation of a population-based programme to curb the emerging cardiovascular disease pandemic in Africa.

Nigeria

The Heart Check Food Labeling Logo

2007 was a great year for the Nigerian Heart Foundation (NHF). On 18 December, the Director-General of the Nigerian NAFDAC, Prof. Dora Akunyili, formally presented the Heart Check Food Labeling Logo to the Nigerian public and the media. She commended NHF and drummed up support for the good work NHF is doing in the fight against heart disease and related issues. "The heart is the engine room of the body", said Prof. Akunyili. "It is the most important organ of the body, because once it stops beating, one is dead". She implored Manufacturers, NGO's, National and Public organisations to support NHF. While

presenting the logo to the participants, she admonished, "When buying oil and other foods, look for the NAFDAC number and information, also check for the NHF logo." She promised to enforce the logo, but reiterated that NAFDAC would give manufacturers time to use up their old labels.

Goodwill messages were delivered by the President of the Nigerian Society of Hypertension, Prof. A. Isah and the Commissioner of Health for the Ogun State, Dr. Mrs. Biodun Oduwole.

Other key speakers at the event were Dr. K. K. Akinroye, the Executive Director of Scientific Affairs and Research at NHF, who spoke of the need for the Heart Check logo programme in the country. He explained the benefits of putting the logo on the product labels. "Manufacturers, consumers, NHF and the country will benefit from the food labeling programme," said Dr. Akinroye.

Dr. Orija, the Executive Director of the Bloom Cancer Care and Support Centre in Lagos, made presentations on the meaning of Cancer, its causes, control, awareness and prevention, while Prof. Omueti of Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) explained the place of fats in nutrition.

The Marketing Manager of NHF, Joy Unegbu, spoke on lobbying for an environment, where the healthier option is the easier choice. More specifically Ms. Unegbu spoke on the need for awareness and advocacy aimed at addressing cardiovascular health promotion and prevention. She presented the NHF's plan to partner with Food and Beverage Manufacturing industries with a view for them to reformulate their products to make them more health friendly.

South Africa

Communications' Report Back

Dress Red was the first major communications campaign for the Heart and Stroke Foundation SA for 2008. South Africans were encouraged to purchase Dress Red stickers and wear something red on Valentine's Day to show their support in the fight against heart disease. Publicity was generated through advertisements in magazines, newspaper articles and features, as well as various radio interviews on a national basis. Local TV channel continuity presenters gave mention of Dress Red throughout the week leading up to February 14.





WHAT'S HAPPENING!

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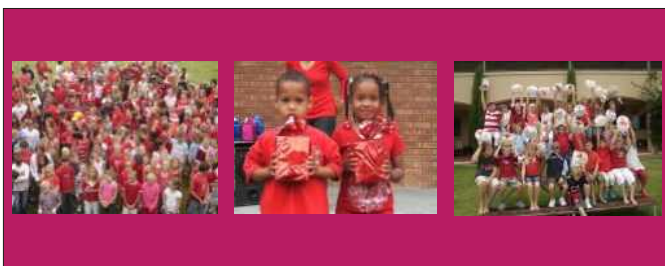


A live broadcast with a community radio station at a local shopping centre created a buzz amongst shoppers. Free health screenings at Durbell Pharmacies were done upon the purchase of a Dress Red sticker. The Mr Price Group also promoted the campaign through various radio interviews, wobblers at their points-of-sale and the distribution of Dress Red posters to all branches.

Go Red for Women is in full swing after the 2008 campaign was launched at a Women's Expo in February at the Cape Town International Convention Centre. Go Red pins were on sale and women were encouraged to join the movement.

The HSFSA once again exhibited at the Cape Argus Pick n Pay Cycle Tour Expo. A Medical Village was set up at the Cycle Tour Expo, at which the cyclists screenings results were captured and those whose results were deemed to be high, were counselled and if necessary advised to withdraw from the race.

Furthermore, we will be exhibiting at the Old Mutual Two Oceans Expo, offering free blood pressure screenings to participants.



Marketing's Report Back

It's been a year since Go Red for Women was launched at the end of March 2007. The campaign has enjoyed successful and impactful national breakfasts. The feedback received from cause partners, events partners, guests and international members has been great. We've received reports using phrases such as 'phenomenal', 'great' and 'I loved it'. As a result of last year's success the breakfasts have retained a place on the 2008 calendar.



Welcome, Welcome, Welcome

A very warm welcome to the AHN's newest member, Bola Ojo. Bola is the new Executive Secretary for the AHN. She will be overseeing the next stages in the development of the AHN by strengthening the network's member organisations and building the capacity of members.

Before taking up the post, Bola worked in the local government in London as the Head of Lifelong Learning and Youth Services.

Bola has a Masters in Law from University College in London as well as a Masters in Business Management from the Christ Church University College in Canterbury. She is one of the founding members and chair of a local community group, known as Women In Action (WiNA).

Her hobbies are reading and travelling. With all her achievements, Bola will now take a lead on developing and implementing the AHN action plan.

Bola's contact details:
bolaibilola@yahoo.co.uk



Right: Bola Ojo



WHAT'S ON!

Call for Applications - Louise Lown Heart Hero Award 2008



The Louise Lown Heart Hero Award is given annually to celebrate and recognise innovative, preventative approaches to promoting cardiovascular health in developing countries and other low-resource settings.

The deadline for the Award applications is 30 April 2008, so apply today.

The Louise Lown Heart Hero Award was established in 2007. Dr. Bernard Lown, Nobel Peace Prize recipient, inventor of the defibrillator and founder of ProCor, created the award to honor his wife's lifelong commitment to the rights and wellbeing of others through her work as a social worker, activist and writer.

In 2007 the Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (HSFSA) received the Heart Hero Award for their Children's Programme for teaching heart healthy practices.

Applications are encouraged from community-based programs (non-profit, governmental or private sector) working to promote heart health in developing countries.

To apply send the required information to Juan Ramos, ProCor Program Coordinator on:
 Email: jramos3@partners.org
 Fax: 001 617 734 5763
 Mail: Louise Lown Heart Hero Award
 Lown Cardiovascular Research Foundation
 21 Longwood Avenue
 Brookline, MA, 02446, USA

For more information visit: www.procor.org or
 Email: info@procor.org.

Global Youth Forum on Development 2008

6-12 April 2008
 Nairobi, Kenya
www.gyfod2008.org
 Contact: info@gyfod2008.org

World Congress of Cardiology

Only six weeks remain until the World Congress of Cardiology 2008 takes place. This year Buenos Aires, Argentina will be the center of attention. The Congress will take place from 18 - 21 May 2008.

The World Congress of Cardiology, the official congress of the World Heart Federation, is held every two years.

The Congress presents the opportunity to learn and network with cardiologists and related specialists, members of heart foundations and health professionals from over 100 countries.

For 2008 the Congress is being jointly organised by the World Heart Federation and the Argentine Federation of Cardiology. By working together, delegates from developed and developing countries will have the opportunity to present and learn about the latest scientific advances on the management of cardiovascular disease and to review effective approaches to tackling the rising burden of cardiovascular disease globally. (March 2008, www.worldheartfederation.org)

For more information visit :
www.worldcardiocongress.org



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