



Symposium
2024

2nd Africa Women's Health Symposium A New Dawn of Partnerships for Women's Health

Accra, Ghana | 23rd May 2024

Innovative Approaches to Increase Access to Medicines and Vaccines for Women's Health

Access to essential medicines and vaccines is a cornerstone of effective healthcare especially for women who face unique health challenges. In Africa, there is an urgent need to explore innovative approaches that can improve access to quality healthcare for women. Innovative solutions for women's health needs are critical to saving lives, but access models that are not fit for purpose in African populations negatively impact the availability of lifesaving medicines and vaccines for women.

Women related cancers including cervical, breast and ovarian cancer, and maternal mortality continue to be the biggest threats to women's health in Africa. Out of the top 20 countries with the highest incidence rates of cervical cancer globally, 19 are situated in Africa. The likelihood of a woman in Africa succumbing to pregnancy-related causes stands at approximately one (1) in 37 compared to 1 in 6500 in Europe.

Products designed for the wide range of women's health needs can dramatically improve women's health and well-being across all life stages. This can include medicines to manage pregnancy-related complications, diagnostics and treatments for women's cancers, and contraceptive products designed to better meet women's preference¹. While there have been growing calls for increasing innovations for women's health care, progress for investing in solutions to improve the health of women and girls, particularly those in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), hasn't kept pace with the need. Persistent weaknesses in health systems, including research and development (R&D) still prevent millions of women from being able to access comprehensive, high-quality, and affordable products and services that fit their unique preferences in Africa.

Aims of the session

- Delve into ground breaking strategies, collaboration and technologies that can be leveraged to enhance the availability and affordability of medicines and vaccines.
- Foster discussions on innovative solutions that address barriers to accessing medicines and vaccines for women in Africa.



19 countries in Africa have the highest rates of cervical cancer

1 in 37 women in Africa succumb to pregnancy-related causes compared to 1 in 6500 in Europe.



Key areas of discussion



Ensuring access to quality medicines and vaccines to women across their life cycle



Women at the centre of drug discovery and research

- Explore strategies to incentivize pharmaceutical companies to invest in R&D for women-specific health products.
- Including women in clinical trials
- Discuss the importance of research funding and collaboration to address gaps in women's health research.



Healthcare financing models that suit women



Role of public-private partnerships (PPPs)

- Examine successful PPP models that have effectively increased access to women's health products.
- Discuss potential partnerships between governments, pharmaceutical companies, and non-profit organizations to drive innovation.

Expected outcomes from the session

- **Actionable recommendation and strategies** that can be implemented to improve access to medicines and vaccines.
- **Development of a roadmap** for stakeholders guiding future efforts and collaborations.

References

1. PATH, Advancing innovations in women's health through policy advocacy, <https://www.path.org/our-impact/articles/advancing-innovations-in-womens-health-through-policy-advocacy/>