



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

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Diagnostics as an Enabler for Advancing Women's Health from Prevention, to Detection, to Management

Women's health is a critical component of overall societal well-being, and ensuring the well-being of women in Africa is key to achieving sustainable development. The journey from prevention to detection and management of women's health issues requires a robust and comprehensive approach, with diagnostics playing an important role. Access to diagnostic services remains a huge challenge in Africa and disparities in access between rural and urban populations are clear, and reduced access may be experienced by women and other vulnerable groups due to economic or social disadvantages. Diagnostic testing is important for women as it not only enables the diagnosis and monitoring of diseases, but also promotes disease prevention and overall health. According to recent estimates for Africa, 47% of the population has little to no access to diagnostics¹ and only 30% of health facilities in Africa have the necessary equipment and reagents to perform basic diagnostic tests due to lack of national prioritization, underfunding and inadequate resources².

Diagnostics is a key driver to achieve Universal Health Coverage goals and delivers a clear return on investment towards health and economic outcomes. There is a need to bring together critical and influential stakeholders across Africa to raise awareness on the importance of investing in diagnostics, following the adoption of the 76th World Health Assembly Resolution on strengthening diagnostics capacity.

Diagnostic testing is critical at every stage of a woman's life and gives healthcare providers the ability and confidence to develop tailored health management strategies and treatment plans for each patient. Many conditions are unique to women or impact women differently than men, requiring distinct approaches from screening, prevention, and treatment. Diagnostic tests provide a broad range of solutions that patients and providers rely on to make important healthcare decisions.

Aims of the session

- Shed light on the role of diagnostics in promoting and enhancing women's health across the African continent.
- Initiate dialogue that will focus on the aspects of diagnostics, spanning from preventative measures to early detection and effective management of both communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Expected outcomes from the session

- **Increased awareness** of the role that diagnostics play in shaping a healthier and more equitable future for women on the continent.
- **Identification of actionable** strategies to improve access to diagnostics.
- **Establishment of a collaborative** network to drive further research, innovation and policy development in the field of diagnostics.

References

1. Kenneth A Fleming et al. The Lancet Commission on diagnostics: transforming access to diagnostics. The Lancet, Volume 398, Issue 10315, 2021, Page 1997–2050. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)00673-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00673-5)
2. World Health Organization Regional Committee for Africa Seventy-third session <http://tinyurl.com/3v6kz4br>



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30%

of health facilities in Africa have the necessary equipment and reagents to perform basic diagnostic tests

Key areas of discussion



Preventive diagnostics to highlight the importance of preventive diagnostics in women's health and explore existing and potential diagnostic tools for identifying risk factors and preventing common health issues.



Early detection and screening to highlight the significance of early detection in improving treatment outcomes, showcase successful diagnostic interventions for diseases prevalent among women in Africa and to discuss the role of technology and innovation in enhancing early detection methods.



Management through diagnostics that will delve into examining how diagnostics contribute to effective management and personalized treatment plans, exploring the integration of diagnostics into healthcare systems for comprehensive women's health management and further discuss the importance of access to diagnostics in different settings, including rural and underserved areas.



Challenges and solutions to identify challenges in implementing diagnostic strategies for women's health in Africa, propose solutions and innovative approaches to overcome barriers, and discuss the role of partnerships and collaborations in addressing these challenges.