



International Women's Day Event Report 2024




International Women's Day

Womb Health and Wealth

Knowledge empowers, and power enriches! Women, it's time to get clued up on all things related to your uterus.

Friday 8th March 2024

The Members' Suite
Emirates Old Trafford Lancashire Cricket Club, Talbot Rd, M16 0PX



Venue: Emirates Old Trafford Lancashire Cricket Club Talbot Road Manchester, M16 0PX

Theme: Womb Health and Wealth

Organiser: Caribbean and African Health Networks (CAHN)

Partners: With Women Worth, MGTU, Cancer Care Diaspora, Afrocats, Nigerian Women Group and Ministry of Angels.

Event Type: This event was a combination of conference and workshops.

Time: 1pm – 8.30pm

Introduction

Aim: To embolden black women with a comprehensive focus on womb health issues, fostering economic prosperity, and igniting synergistic collaboration with esteemed black organisation's on the global stage of International Women's Day 2024.

Objective:

- Improve women's reproductive health and well-being.
- Increase awareness and education on womb health issues.
- Promote economic empowerment and financial independence for women.
- Enhance access to healthcare and support services for women.
- Foster community and collaboration among women for shared prosperity.

Event topics:

- Infertility
- Fibroids
- Endometriosis
- Polycystic Ovary Syndrome
- Menopause

Target Audience: All professionals, employers, commissioners and all communities (men, women and children).

The Planning Group

We had a great opportunity to plan and collaborate with women-owned organisations such as Women Worth, MGTY, Cancer Care Diaspora, Afrocats, Nigerian Women Group, and Ministry of Angels for this year's event. We held weekly planning meetings from January to March 2024, which helped us concentrate on planning and key actions for the events.

Attendance

- **Total Attendees:** We had about 300 attendees attend the event including CAHN staff members, and volunteers and food was provided with no cost to the attendees.

Agenda

The event consisted of three parts:

- Conference and workshop: 1pm – 4:30pm
- Networking dinner: 4:30pm – 6pm
- Celebration of women: 6pm – 8:30pm

EVENT HIGHLIGHT IS AS FOLLOWS:

A variety of speakers, community performers and groups were present at this year's event. The event comperes were Dr Vanessa Apea, Sakinat and Fabiola (CAHN Team).

Guest speakers:

- Dr. Aziza Sesay, General Practitioner and Educator
- Dr. Edmond Edi-Osagie, Neonatologist.
- Sara Chief Executive, Trafford City Council
- Erimna Bell
- Mark Adkestone
- Mayor Dekores
- DL/High Sheriff and rep of the Lord Lieutenant Liz Mary Walker

Presentations:

- Womb Health Womb Health and overall life quality by Dr Aziza Consultant Obstetrician & Gynecologist
- Shattering the Stigma of female Infertility, Hormonal Imbalance and PCOS –Insights, Challenges, and Hope by Dr Loretta
- Understanding Uterine Fibroids by Dr Loretta
- Infertility by Dr Itunnu
- Egg freezing and infertility Dr Eddie
- Empowerment and motivational talk by Sharon Ameseu

Announcements:

Response to survey findings from GM perspective by Elaine Mills

Performance:

- Magdalen Afrocats (One of our partners)
- African Dancer
- Jet Black
- Across Umah (Drama)
- Nigerian Women Groups (Dancing and Drumming)
- Cancer Care Diaspora
- DJ Faidat



Presentation Highlights

PRESENTATION 1: WELCOME ADDRESS



Dr. Faye Ruddock DL, on behalf of the Caribbean & African Health Network (CAHN) and its partners, welcomed attendees to International Women’s Day (IWD) #Inspire Inclusion IWD2024. She noted that in 2023, CAHN collaborated with the Nigerian Women’s group and Women of Worth to highlight Black women’s menopause experiences. This year, CAHN has expanded its partnerships with six organisations dedicated to education and celebration.

The event consists of two parts: Part 1 explores uterine/womb health, including menopause, and its challenges for Black women; Part 2 features cultural and lively entertainment celebrating women. Dr. Ruddock emphasized CAHN’s alignment with the IWD theme #inspire inclusion, focusing on valuing, belonging, and empowering Black women.

She addressed the disparities Black women face in womb health, often due to systemic bias and racism, with interim survey findings to be shared. Dr. Vanessa Apea, a key host, will discuss a Black Women’s health manifesto. Dr. Ruddock thanked the speakers and encouraged participation in the evening’s cultural celebration. She also thanked survey participants, noting that findings will contribute to the Greater Manchester Women’s Forum and the National Black Health Manifesto for improvement. Dr. Ruddock concluded by expressing gratitude to all partners and a commitment to ongoing collaboration.

PRESENTATION 2:

Keynote Address By Dr Aziza Sesay



Dr. Aziza Sesay, an NHS General Practitioner, delivered a keynote presentation on the topic of "Disparities in Womb Health and Overall Quality of Life" in celebration of International Women's Day. Dr. Sesay began by emphasizing the importance of this day as a global platform to address critical issues affecting women's health and well-being.

She highlighted the significant disparities that exist in womb health across different demographics. Dr. Sesay pointed out that socioeconomic status, race, and geographic location are major determinants of the quality-of-care women receive. She provided compelling statistics showing that women from lower-income backgrounds and ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected by conditions such as fibroids, endometriosis, and reproductive cancers. These disparities, she explained, often result from a combination of limited access to healthcare, inadequate medical resources, and implicit biases within the healthcare system.

Dr. Sesay also discussed the broader impact of womb health on overall quality of life. She noted that chronic conditions related to womb health can lead to severe physical pain, emotional distress, and significant financial burdens. Moreover, the stigma and lack of awareness surrounding these conditions further exacerbate the challenges faced by affected women. Dr. Sesay called for increased public education and awareness campaigns to destigmatize womb health issues and encourage women to seek timely medical attention.

In her address, Dr. Sesay advocated for policy changes to ensure equitable access to healthcare for all women. She urged healthcare providers to adopt a more holistic and inclusive approach to women's health, one that considers the diverse backgrounds and unique needs of each patient. By doing so, she argued, we can work towards closing the gap in health disparities and improve the quality of life for all women.

PRESENTATION 2:



INTERIM FINDINGS OF SURVEY ON WOMB HEALTH CHALLENGES AMONG BLACK WOMEN

Interim findings from the survey presented by Dr. Sakinat Baiyewu, Head of Health & Wellbeing at CAHN, revealed critical insights into the experiences and impacts of uterine fibroids and other womb health challenges on Black women. The survey, aiming to understand the social, emotional, and psychological effects of these health issues, garnered responses from over 100 participants.

Key findings highlighted significant delays in diagnosis and inadequate treatment. For instance, one respondent reported experiencing symptoms since age 14 and undergoing over 20 consultations and 10 scans before receiving a diagnosis. Another shared that despite being diagnosed four years ago, they are still awaiting surgery as their condition worsens.

Most respondents, over 55%, indicated their conditions were not managed in a timely manner, and 58.5% expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of care. Additionally, 71.7% felt health information was not tailored to their needs as Black women. Many participants reported feeling their symptoms were trivialized or misunderstood by healthcare professionals.

Dr. Baiyewu emphasised the urgent need for policy changes and better education for healthcare providers to address these disparities. She called for the inclusion of Black women's lived experiences in healthcare strategies to ensure equitable and effective care, advocating for immediate action to improve the quality of womb health care for Black women.



Dr. Loretta Ogboro Okora, a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, delivered a compelling address on "Shattering the Stigma of Fibroids/Endometriosis and PCOS: Insights, Challenges, and Hope." She began by highlighting the pervasive stigma surrounding fibroids, endometriosis, and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), conditions that affect a significant number of women worldwide. Dr. Loretta emphasized that these conditions are often misunderstood and underdiagnosed, leading to unnecessary suffering and delayed treatment.

She shared insights into the biological and environmental factors contributing to these conditions, noting that fibroids and endometriosis can severely impact a woman's quality of life, causing chronic pain, heavy menstrual bleeding, and fertility issues. Similarly, PCOS is associated with symptoms like irregular periods, excessive hair growth, and metabolic problems. Dr. Loretta underscored the importance of early diagnosis and comprehensive treatment plans tailored to individual needs.

Addressing the challenges, Dr. Loretta pointed out that many women face significant barriers in accessing quality healthcare, including cultural stigmas and lack of awareness among healthcare providers. She called for increased education and advocacy to dismantle these barriers and improve patient outcomes.

Concluding on a hopeful note, Dr. Loretta highlighted recent advancements in medical research and treatment options, encouraging continued efforts to support affected women. She urged the medical community to prioritize empathetic care and to work collectively towards shattering the stigma, ensuring that all women receive the support and treatment they deserve.

Breakout Sessions:

There was a breakout session discussion where attendees were grouped by topics below, followed by a one-minute presentation of three key findings.

- What change will you like to see in a black women's health manifesto
- Food and womb health
- Infertility/PCOS: cultural pressure and faith
- Navigating fibroid in a bias system
- Experiences/ menstrual health/Period pains/heavy periods

BREAKOUT ROOM 3 with Dr Loretta, Dr Aziza, Dr Oghe

IMMUNISATION AND SCREENING

1. What are the challenges?
2. What can be done?

Statistics demonstrated that black people are still reluctant to take vaccination (immunisation gap).

- ★ Community asking during COVID. Why are you coming to us when you only need us? Come to us also when we need you (ask us for how we are doing)
- ★ Misinformation about screening (e.g. They are taking our DNA)
- ★ Trust is broken, we need to build consistent trust.

SOLUTIONS

Let us dwell on solutions because we do know the challenges already.

Gabriella- Brent Council- Supporting the Portuguese Community.

- ★ Same language (I have the budget with me if someone wants to register with the GP)
- ★ In Portugal, the immunisation system is different. Kids have yellow book (big challenge with measles).
- ★ Immigration is a big concern for the Zimbabwean Community.
- ★ Culture orientation at a point of entry.

Representation- Midland.

Our services are hard to access and not people hard to reach.

- Language barriers, cultural access, community entry port.
- CAHN to target our churches and mosque.
- In Sheffield, a Somali Community has taken it to their mosque, community.
- Trust: the leader, the place, the system, NHS.

DIRECTOR OF PH CROYDON.

Working with the member of the community, knowing when to get them, where and when?
London is at a lower rate with immunisation.

- Train is a big workforce (culture, language...) bringing their full self to the work.
- Sharing the best practices.

GLOBAL COMMUNITY ENABLERS

- Community assets: Other people cannot reach out where we can reach because we give people the test results at the right time, understand the results on different ethnic backgrounds.
- Talking to commissioners about barriers
- The system is not attractive to some communities.
- How we talk to our commissioner that our community is not hard to reach instead is the policy makers who fail, or do not understand our community.

PRIMARY CARE- Improve guidance on how to work with our community.

Integrated Care Board (ICB)-CAHN

- Cultural champions.
- Advise writing business cases in a language that they understand.

SOCIAL MARKETER

- Make people aware that immunisation and screening is free in the UK.
- Different media tools to use that are accessible by black young people (e.g. Human papillomavirus (HPV))
- Nobody is listening to us. Research has been done on black people (e.g. breast cancer) by the commissioners.

National policy.

GP does take care of people's basic healthcare needs, like check-ups, treating common illness, and providing advice on staying healthy.

Partner / Collaborating with community organisation such as CAHN.

- People making decisions do not look like us.
- Racism is a big PH issue.
- Go there and interrogate the processes.

There are ways to get out of this situation.

Collaboration is important (we tend to be working solo)

We need to break into the system so that we can voice within.

- Our strength comes from our diversity.
- We need to collaborate to make our voice heard.

- Government and institutional priorities.

VCFSE AND INTEGRATED CARE BOARDS AND COLLABORATIONS

CEDI, PASTOR NICK, SMITH

Examples of Collaboration and Health System

1. During pandemic we understood that working and listening to the community would have made a big impact.
2. From this programme we are planning to develop and learn, sharing food and practices to new starters.
3. We have a lot of learning from Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations

Tower Hamlet works with Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE)

Lack of funding from the Integrated Care Systems (ICS) made the work very difficult.

Access to funding to allow the VCSE integrate in the Integrated Care Systems (ICS).

- Integrate care system/ become independent ICS. As a result, the focus to adult, children and the homeless.
- How do we understand?
- We cannot fund everybody.
- There is a lot of challenges within ICBs. Maybe we need to develop more sustainable models.

TRUSTEE FOR AN ORGANISATION IN LONDON

Member of an ICB

Funding is inequal. Therefore, who is going is already designed.

- Voluntary sectors understand their communities better than the NHS, they have been around longer than NHS.
- It is not about innovation it is becoming.

Social finance working with CAHN for the social innovation.

We measure the success of funding innovation.

Social finance model

University of Bolton

We collaborate and it becomes a competition. Giving back to social value is crucial. We need to stop competing and collaborate.

Networking Opportunities: We were delighted to have business stallholders at the event, offering a diverse range of products and services to the attendees such as:

- Touched by an Angel by Val

- Cadent
- Educup Yourself
- Can-Survive UK
- North Trafford PCN
- All Things African
- House of Prints
- Ellise M Business Marketing services
- Joolzery
- Cancer care Diaspora
- Nigerian Women's Group Manchester



Appendices

- **Photos/Videos:** [INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY 2024 by AdewumiADISASTudio \(pixieset.com\)](https://www.pixieset.com)



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