



GHANAIAN SOCIETY OF CARDIOLOGY

23rd February, 2024

A COMMUNIQUE BY THE GHANAIAN SOCIETY OF CARDIOLOGY AT ITS 6TH ANNUAL GENERAL AND SCIENTIFIC MEETING

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The Ghanaian Society of Cardiology (GSC) organized its 6th Annual General and Scientific Meeting under the theme, **“Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease: A Silent Killer”**. The meeting occurred at the African Regent Hotel in Accra from the 22nd to the 23rd of February 2024. The occasion was graced by the Presidential Advisor on Health, Dr Anthony Nsiah Asare and several distinguished guests, both local and international.

Atherosclerotic cardiovascular diseases occur following the deposition of cholesterol in blood vessels in all parts of the body, including those in the heart, brain, kidneys, legs, and eyes. The disease process usually begins in childhood and progresses silently until it results in catastrophic consequences like heart attack, stroke, chronic kidney disease, peripheral arterial disease, and erectile dysfunction. In Ghana, the most common consequence is stroke, which often affects young adults in the productive phase of their lives.

Deliberations from the meeting highlighted the need to prevent atherosclerotic cardiovascular diseases through a heart-healthy lifestyle, including strategies such as adopting a healthy diet (with adequate intake of fruits and vegetables, a low-fat diet, low sugar, and low salt diet), increasing physical activity levels, quitting smoking, reducing alcohol intake, and maintaining a healthy weight. In addition, recent evidence from Ghana and Nigeria suggests that green leafy vegetables are protective against stroke in individuals of African descent. The meeting also highlighted the need for good control of hypertension, diabetes, and high cholesterol, as well as the maintenance of adequate body weight to prevent the occurrence of heart attack and stroke.

The Ghanaian Society of Cardiology, in line with its mandate to promote good cardiovascular health for all Ghanaians, recommends the following measures to reduce the burden of atherosclerotic cardiovascular diseases and their catastrophic consequences.

1. All Ghanaians, particularly adults, should be encouraged to adopt a heart-healthy lifestyle. This can be achieved through check-ups to detect cardiovascular disease risk factors such as high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and high cholesterol at least annually.
2. Apparently healthy Ghanaians, who are 40 years old and above should also visit their healthcare providers for integrated care/screening including knowing their cardiovascular disease risk and the plan to prevent the occurrence of cardiovascular diseases in the future.
3. Individuals with established cardiovascular disease risk factors like hypertension and diabetes, and/or cardiovascular diseases like stroke and previous heart attacks should comply with their routine clinic attendance and treatment plans as prescribed by a certified healthcare provider.

4. Cardiovascular health policies that encourage heart health should be instituted to promote heart health in the Ghanaian populace. These include provisions for free cardiovascular risk factor screening through Wellness clinics at all levels of Ghana's healthcare systems, provision of safe areas for physical activity and exercise such as parks, and promulgation of policies that encourage a heart-healthy diet (labelling of food products, including fat and salt content).
5. The GSC, in tandem with international best practice, highly recommends organizations, both governmental and non-governmental (including private institutions, banks, churches and mosques), to institute health awareness programs for their staff/members and, as a matter of necessity, install portable automated electronic defibrillators on-site to assist in the treatment of sudden cardiac arrest.
6. Continuous professional education for healthcare professionals to support cardiovascular disease care nationally, given the scarcity of skilled cardiovascular care professionals nationwide.
7. The Technical Working Group for Cardiovascular Disease care in Ghana, a subcommittee of the National Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Steering Committee, should be empowered to improve Cardiovascular Disease care in Ghana.
8. The government should strongly increase its support to GSC in executing its mandate on cardiovascular disease advocacy and training across the country.

The Ghanaian Society of Cardiology craves the indulgence of all key stakeholders, healthcare professionals, government and policymakers, and all Ghanaians to support these key recommendations to promote cardiovascular health for all Ghanaians.



Dr. Collins Kokuro
President, GSC



Dr. Lambert Tetteh Appiah
General Secretary, GSC

Cc:

1. The Presidential Special Advisor on Health, Dr Anthony Nsiah Asare
2. The Chairman of Parliamentary Select Committee on Health
3. Ministry of Health, Ghana
4. The Ghana Health Service
5. The Program Manager, NCD
6. Ghana NCD Alliance
7. DEMSOG
8. Neurological Society of Ghana
9. Ghana Medical Association
10. Pharmaceutical Society of Ghana
11. All Media Houses