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Technical Assistance for the Implementation of the National Cancer Screening Programme in Serbia



THE CONCEPT

The main purpose of screening for cancer is to reduce mortality and to improve patient's quality of life through the detection of cancer in early stages. Serbia is among European countries with high cancer mortality rates. Preventable cancer deaths from breast, cervical and colorectal cancer contribute considerably to this mortality.

Cervical cancer mortality is one of the highest in Europe, with more than two thirds of new cases detected late in the course of the disease, when the prognosis is poor.

Breast cancer makes up 30% of all newly diagnosed cases of cancer and represents the third most common cause of death among women above the age of 45. 70% of new breast cancers are larger than 2 cm when detected and have already spread to other tissues.

The death of colorectal cancer is above the EU average and is the second cause of cancer deaths in both genders. Most cases are detected in late invasive phase.

These data indicate the potential gain from a well organised early detection system. Early diagnosis and treatment of cervical, breast and colorectal cancer can have significant impact in reducing cancer-related preventable mortality and in improving the health of the Serbian population.

THE OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the improvement of the health and well-being of the population of Serbia by supporting the implementation of national cancer screening system. Specific goals, reflected in the three inter-related project components, are:

1. To strengthen the organisational and administrative capacities of the institutes of public health related to cancer screening programmes.
2. To strengthen human capacities by training health professionals participating in the operation of the national cancer screening programmes.
3. To assist the Ministry of Health in cancer screening mobilization campaigns by developing information material for targeted population groups.

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

Ministry of Health, Health Insurance Fund, national and district institutes of public health, National Cancer Screening Office, primary, secondary and tertiary health providers involved in cancer screening, academic and other institutions involved in post-graduate and continuous medical education.

THE EXPECTED RESULTS

- Established and operational National Cancer Screening Office (NCSO), working according to the international public health standards.
- 50 district public health institute experts trained to train primary medical doctors in methodology and principles of cancer screening.
- Comprehensive training curricula and course materials developed and training delivered to 80 radiologists, 100 radiographers, 30 cytopathologists, 100 cytotechnicians, 50 gastroenterologists and 80 colonoscopy assistants on techniques for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening.
- Educational curricula incorporated into the continuous medical education system.
- Support to Ministry of Health mobilization campaign with provision of information leaflets for patients and primary health care providers.
- Three-year plan for future NSCO activities.

