



Uniting healthcare professionals and survivors to raise meningitis awareness in Tanzania

For World Meningitis Day 2024, Friend of CoMO and medical doctor **Spensa'r Fulgence** organised a three-week meningitis awareness campaign in the city of Mbeya, Tanzania, including events in schools and a hospital. Collaboration on the project led to the proposed establishment of a meningitis advocacy organisation. These activities were funded by the CoMO World Meningitis Day 2024 Advocacy Fund pilot project.



Name

Dr. Spensa'r Fulgence



Background

Medical doctor, academic researcher and public health advocate, passionate about ending preventable causes of death



Location

Tanzania

From previous work screening for meningitis in the Southern Highlands (around Mbeya), a region with complex geography and an underdeveloped healthcare system, Dr. Fulgence had observed low awareness and inadequate case reporting. He hoped his awareness campaign would promote life-saving education and increase media engagement and advocacy.

To support the organisation of the campaign, Dr. Fulgence recruited young healthcare professional volunteers. He also met with local government representatives to ensure their support.

Engaging parents

An event took place at Mbeya Regional Referral Hospital (MRRH)'s paediatric department,

with parents, children, local radio representatives and healthcare officials. Materials and posters highlighting meningitis symptoms were distributed to attendees, fostering early awareness.

Educating students

Activities were held at three secondary schools to educate students about meningitis symptoms, prevention and

treatment. Over 3,400 students engaged in interactive sessions led by teachers, healthcare workers and the Council Health Management Team.

Press conference

A press conference assembled media representatives to amplify the campaign's message, distributing educational materials. Local radio station Mbeya FM also played a key role in broadcasting the stories of survivors and healthcare workers to reach a broader audience.

Marking World Meningitis Day

260 people attended an event at MRRH, including council commissioners, healthcare professionals and survivors. It featured sessions on the causes, prevention and lifelong consequences of meningitis, the distribution of educational materials, a projection featuring [the Meningitis Flag](#), and a photo shoot at which survivors connected and received support.

Impact

The campaign reached approximately 280,000 people via radio and more than 4,000 directly. The project successfully united seventeen meningitis survivors, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. It also resulted in the emergence of meningitis advocates, including young healthcare workers and supportive government officials.

Future plans

Plans to establish an advocacy organisation for meningitis survivors – the first of its kind nationally – are now underway. Dr. Fulgence will also collaborate with several regional referral hospitals between 2025 and 2028 to visit medical facilities and communities.

They seek to strengthen healthcare services at the grassroots level, promote knowledge-sharing, and enhance the overall response to meningitis through effective training, education and adherence to national guidelines.



Contacts

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I am honoured to witness the profound impact this project has made. Seeing the enthusiasm and commitment of so many, particularly the youth, who are eager to lead and support this movement, has been truly inspiring. This initiative has sparked hope and a collective drive to combat meningitis.

Dr. Spensa'r Fulgence

