



**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

Report on the International Women's Day Event 2024

Theme: Womb Health and Wealth

Organised by:

Caribbean and African Health Networks (CAHN)

In Partnership with:

- Afrocats
- Cancer Care Diaspora
- MGTY (Manchester's Got Talent Youth)
- Ministry of Angels
- Nigerian Women Group
- Women of Worth (WoW)

Event Type:

Integrated Conference and Workshop Event

Venue:

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

Date:

Friday, 8th March 2024

Time:

1:00 PM - 8:30 PM (13:00 - 20:30)

Empowering Women, Elevating Health, Enriching Lives

Report Summary

Introduction

Aim of the Event: To empower Black women through a holistic focus on womb health, fostering economic prosperity and inspiring collaborative partnerships with esteemed Black organisations in the Greater Manchester and Northwest of England area, with community impact, to celebrate the International Women's Day 2024.

Objectives:

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

Event Sub-Topics

- Infertility
- Fibroids
- Endometriosis
- Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)
- Menopause

Target Audience

This event was designed for local healthcare professionals, public and private employers of women, commissioners, and all community members, including men, women, and children.

Planning and Collaboration

The event was a product of strategic collaboration with distinguished women-led organisations: Women of Worth (WoW), MGTY (Manchester's Got Talent Youth), Cancer Care Diaspora, Afrocats, Nigerian Women Group, and Ministry of Angels.

Through a Steering Committee, weekly planning meetings were held between partner organisations between January and March 2024, to ensure a focused approach to planning, execution, and strategic action.

Attendance

- **Total Attendees:** Approximately 300 participants, including CAHN staff members and volunteers.
- **Catering:** Complimentary meals were provided to all attendees.

Agenda

Part One: Conference and Workshops | 1:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Part Two: Networking Dinner | 4:30 PM – 6:00 PM

Part Three: Celebration of Women | 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Event Highlights

Comperes:

- Dr Vanessa Apea
- Dr Sakinat Baiyewu (CAHN Team)
- Fabiola Bayavuge (CAHN Team)

Esteemed Guest Speakers:

Dr. Aziza Sesay: NHS General Practitioner, GP Educator, Honorary Senior Clinical Lecturer, and Founder of 'Talks with Dr. Sesay', an online platform dedicated to women's health education.

Dr. Edmond Edi-Osagie: Consultant Gynaecologist and Specialist in Reproductive Medicine and Surgery.

Sara Todd: Chief Executive of Trafford Council.

Professor Erinma Bell MBE DL JP: Peace Activist and Co-founder of CARISMA (Community Alliance for Renewal, Inner South Manchester Area), recognised for her work in tackling gun crime in Manchester.

Mark Adlestone OBE DL: Chairman of Beaverbrooks the Jewellers and former High Sheriff of Greater Manchester (2019/2020).

Councillor Yasmine Dar: Lord Mayor of Manchester (2023/2024), the first South Asian woman to hold the position.

Liz Mary Walker: Deputy Lieutenant and High Sheriff of Greater Manchester, representing the Lord Lieutenant.

Expert Presentations:

- ***Womb Health and Life Quality*** – Dr Aziza Sesay (NHS General Practitioner (GP), Palfrey Health Centre in Walsall, West Midlands and Broadway Medical Centre in Walsall, West Midlands)
- ***Shattering the Stigma of Female Infertility, Hormonal Imbalance, and PCOS: Insights, Challenges, and Hope*** – Dr. Loretta Oduware Ogboro-Okor (Obstetrician and Gynaecologist associated with Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust; Also, the Obstetrics Skills and Drills Lead at Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust)
- ***Understanding Uterine Fibroids*** – Dr. Loretta Oduware Ogboro-Okor
- ***Infertility*** – Dr Itunu Johnson-Sogbetun (NHS General Practitioner (GP), Queen Mary University of London Medical School Tutor and Examiner, Founder of DrShoCares Clinics in Harley Street, London, and St Albans, Hertfordshire)
- ***Egg Freezing and Infertility*** – Dr. Edmond Edi-Osagie (Consultant Gynaecologist and Head of Reproductive Medicine and Surgery Services at Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, Senior Lecturer at the University of Manchester, and Consultant at Circle Health Group)
- ***Women Empowerment and Motivation*** – Sharon Amesu (Leadership Consultant, Executive Coach, Former Criminal Barrister, Co-Founder of She Leads for Legacy, and Honorary Industry Fellow at the University of Salford Business School)

Announcements:

- Survey findings and responses from a Greater Manchester perspective – Elaine Mills

Live Dance and Music Performances:

- Magdalen Afrocats (Partner Organisation)
- African Dance Performance
- Jet Black
- Across Umah (Drama)
- Nigerian Women Group (Dancing and Drumming)
- Cancer Care Diaspora
- DJ Faidat

Reflections and Impact

The International Women's Day 2024 event organised by CAHN in partnership with other collaborators, was a resounding success, serving as a transformative platform to address critical issues surrounding womb health, economic empowerment, and community collaboration. The event successfully ignited meaningful discussions, fostered stronger community bonds, and celebrated the resilience, strength, and contributions of Black women. Through engaging keynote presentations, impactful breakout sessions, and vibrant cultural performances, attendees gained valuable insights and practical tools to advocate for better health outcomes and social change within their communities.

Notably, the interim survey findings highlighted the systemic barriers Black women face in accessing timely and adequate womb health care. Testimonies of delayed diagnoses, unmet treatment needs, and perceived neglect within healthcare systems highlighted the urgency for immediate policy reforms and systemic changes. These insights reinforced the event's mission to confront health disparities and demand equitable healthcare tailored to Black women's lived experiences.

The event also emphasised CAHN's unwavering commitment to championing health equity, dismantling systemic barriers, and fostering economic empowerment for Black women. By expanding partnerships with six influential organisations, CAHN laid a solid foundation for future collaborative efforts that will continue to drive impactful change.

Call to Action

To sustain the momentum and translate dialogue into tangible outcomes, the following actions are imperative:

1. **Policy Advocacy:** Urge policymakers and healthcare providers to prioritise equitable access to comprehensive womb health care for Black women. Incorporate lived experiences into policy frameworks to ensure inclusive healthcare solutions.
2. **Community Engagement:** Strengthen partnerships with community organisations, faith groups, and cultural hubs to bridge trust gaps and provide culturally responsive healthcare services.
3. **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch targeted health education initiatives to destigmatise womb health conditions, encourage timely medical consultations, and empower women to prioritise their reproductive health.
4. **Healthcare Provider Training:** Implement continuous cultural competency training for healthcare professionals to eliminate biases and improve patient-provider relationships.
5. **Research and Data Collection:** Support ongoing research into womb health disparities and invest in data-driven strategies to address the unique healthcare needs of Black women.
6. **Collaborative Action:** Foster multi-sector collaboration between voluntary organisations, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), and policymakers to develop sustainable healthcare models and innovative funding solutions.

The International Women's Day 2024 event has laid the groundwork for impactful advocacy and collective action. CAHN calls upon all stakeholders-healthcare professionals, policymakers, community leaders, and individuals- to join in dismantling systemic barriers and co-creating a future where Black women receive equitable healthcare and thrive in all aspects of life.

Report Prepared by:
Caribbean and African Health Network (CAHN)
Date: March 2024
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Catalogue of Event Presentations

Presentation 1: Welcome Address by Dr Faye Ruddock, The Chair of CAHN



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 (WoW) to highlight Black women’s menopause experiences. She highlighted that, reflecting on that collaborative effort and its impact, this year, CAHN had

expanded its partnerships to include six influential organisations that are dedicated to women education, community engagement and celebration.

Dr Ruddock described the event has consisting of two parts: Part 1 which will explore uterine/womb health, including menopause, and its challenges for Black women; and Part 2 which will feature cultural and lively entertainment celebrating women. Dr. Ruddock emphasised 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. She mentioned that Dr. Vanessa Apea, a key host, will discuss a Black Women’s Health manifesto as a culmination of the event. Dr. Ruddock thanked the speakers and encouraged participation in the evening’s cultural celebration. She also thanked survey participants, noting that the findings will contribute to the Greater Manchester (GM) Women’s Forum and the National Black Health Manifesto for Improvement. Dr. Ruddock concluded her remarks by expressing gratitude to all partners with a strong commitment to sustain the 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*" as a 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 destigmatise womb health issues and encourage women to seek timely medical attention.

In her closing remarks, 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 3: Interim Findings on Womb Health among Black Women by Dr Sakinat Baiyewu



Interim findings from the survey were presented by Dr. Sakinat Baiyewu, Head of Health & Wellbeing at CAHN. The report provided 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 across the UK.

Key survey findings highlighted significant delays in diagnosis and inadequate treatment. For instance, one respondent reported experiencing symptoms from age 14 and undergoing over 20 consultations and 10 scans before receiving a diagnosis within the NHS. Another respondent shared that despite being diagnosed four years ago, they are still awaiting surgery while 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 they received. Additionally, 71.7% felt health information was not tailored to their needs as Black women. Many participants reported feeling their symptoms were trivialised 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.

Presentation 4: Expert presentation by Dr. Loretta Oduware Ogboro-Okor



Dr. Loretta Oduware Ogboro-Okor, 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 emphasised 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 prioritise empathetic care and to work collectively towards shattering the stigma, ensuring that all women receive the support and treatment they deserve.

Snippets from the Breakout Sessions:

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

- 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 the treatment of fibroids in a biased system
- Lived or Shared Experiences about Menstrual health/Period pains/Heavy periods

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

PHOTO GALLERY



Supplementary Resource

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