

Improving Care and Overall Experience for Patients Who Present to a Tanzania Clinic with Suspected Cardiovascular Diseases

Africa is home to more than 1 billion people and like much of the world, is significantly burdened by the growing cardiovascular disease (CVD) epidemic. In sub-Saharan Africa, CVDs are responsible for approximately 13% of all deaths, and can be partially attributed to lacking or insufficient healthcare systems and infrastructure to identify and manage CVDs. For example, delays in testing can substantially delay patient care and affect patient outcomes. This used to be the case when patients presented to Faith Medical Tanzania Clinics, a local clinic in Tanzania. The facility was capable of basic triage and testing; however, patients requiring additional and urgent follow-up needed to be transported to a larger healthcare facility for additional testing. Given the scarcity of resources and high demand for specialized investigations, identification and treatment could be substantially delayed.

Recognizing that any opportunity to streamline testing could markedly impact treatment and outcomes, an integrated clinical care at Faith Medical Tanzania Clinics collaborated to implement high-sensitivity troponin testing into routine clinical practice for patients with suspected CVD. Thus, when patients were transferred to another facility, troponin results would be immediately available, enabling expedited care.

With integration of this new triage method, patient wait times for additional testing were greatly reduced. Additionally, and due largely in part to in-house troponin testing, there has been a 40% reduction in the number of patients requiring referrals to other hospitals. Consequently, healthcare costs related to transportation and investigations have gone down, while increasing the overall confidence of clinicians providing this greatly needed care.

For their pioneering efforts in improving patient experience and outcomes in Tanzania, this integrated clinical care team from Faith Medical Tanzania Clinics Joyce Mung'ong'o Mazuma, *Laboratory Medicine and Managing Director, Faith Medical Tanzania Clinics*,



Pictured (L to R): Dr Felician Kibacha, Rev Dr. Yusufu Ngaleni and Joyce B Mung'ong'o

Felician Kibacha, MD at Muhimbili Hospital, Pendo Kibona, MD at Faith Medical Tanzania Clinics and Saum Seif, MD, Medical Officer at Faith Medical Tanzania Clinics was recognized for achievement with the 2020 UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence awards.

To learn more about this integrated clinical care team and more, visit www.UnivantsHCE.com.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Cardiovascular disease affects millions worldwide and strategic efforts to reduce this burden can have substantial impact on health and wellness of the population.
2. Streamlining provision of care in emerging markets through expedited triage is an important opportunity to improve outcomes.
3. Improving triage of patients with suspected cardiovascular disease can improve patient experience, increase clinician confidence and reduce overall healthcare costs.