



AfriFOODlinks

Article

Tunis Science City and the National Institute of Nutrition and Food Technology Co-Lead World Cancer Day Initiative: Emphasizing Nutrition's Crucial Role in Prevention and Treatment, in Collaboration with Key Partners.



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Tunis, February 1, 2025 – In a powerful observance of World Cancer Day, the Tunis Science City, in partnership with the National Institute of Nutrition and Food Technology Zouhair Kallal (INNTA) partner in AfriFOODlinks project, the Directorate of Primary Health Care (Ministry of Health), the Regional Health Directorate of Tunis, and UNICEF, convened a landmark educational day at the Amphitheatre El Khawarzmi. This event underscored the pivotal role of healthy nutrition in cancer prevention, treatment optimization, and overall public health.

The day's program featured a comprehensive series of scientific lectures delivered by leading experts, addressing the complex etiology of cancer and emphasizing evidence-based preventative strategies. These lectures aimed to demystify cancer, empower attendees with actionable knowledge, and foster a culture of proactive health management.

Dr. Beji Chiraz of INNTA, a pivotal partner in the AfriFOODlinks project, delivered a powerful presentation detailing nutrition's multifaceted role in cancer care: from prevention to optimizing treatment efficacy, enhancing patient well-being, and significantly reducing the risk of recurrence

Interactive Workshops: Bridging Knowledge and Practice

A core component of the event was a series of interactive workshops designed to translate scientific insights into practical applications. Notably, a workshop focused on the direct impact of a balanced diet on cancer prevention, providing participants with tangible dietary recommendations and strategies.

Recognizing the importance of early intervention, specialized workshops were conducted for children and adolescents. These sessions aimed to cultivate healthy eating habits from a young age, highlighting the detrimental effects of ultra-processed foods and promoting informed dietary choices.

AfriFOODlinks: Pioneering Sustainable Urban Food Systems

The event served as a platform to promote the Afrifoodlinks project, an innovative initiative dedicated to enhancing urban food systems across African cities. Afrifoodlinks champions a multi-pronged approach, including:

- **Nutrient-Rich Food Reformulation:** Reformulating subsidized bread to enhance nutrient and fiber content.
- **Urban Agriculture:** Establishing urban community gardens to increase access to fresh produce.



- **School Nutrition Improvement:** Enhancing the nutritional quality of school canteen meals. The Afrifoodlinks project was actively integrated into the practical workshop sessions, demonstrating its real-world impact and potential for scalability.

A Collaborative Effort for Public Health Impact



The event drew a diverse audience, including physicians, researchers, nutrition students, educators, and representatives from civil society organizations, highlighting the collaborative nature of the effort. This multidisciplinary approach facilitated a rich exchange of knowledge and perspectives, strengthening the collective commitment to cancer prevention and control.

By fostering public awareness, promoting healthy dietary practices, and championing innovative initiatives like Afrifoodlinks, the Tunis Science City and its partners are making significant strides in the fight against cancer. This event served as a powerful reminder of the importance of proactive health management and the transformative potential of nutrition in safeguarding public health.

key messages and take-aways from the World Cancer Day event at Tunis Science City were:

- **Nutrition's Pivotal Role in Cancer:**

- The central message was the critical importance of healthy nutrition in cancer prevention, treatment optimization, and overall patient health.
- Experts emphasized that nutrition is not just preventative but also plays a significant role in improving treatment responses and minimizing cancer relapses.

- **Empowerment Through Knowledge:**

- The event aimed to demystify cancer through scientific lectures, providing attendees with actionable knowledge to manage their health proactively.
- **Practical Application of Knowledge:**
 - Interactive workshops were crucial, translating scientific insights into practical dietary recommendations and strategies, particularly for cancer prevention.
 - Specialized workshops for children and adolescents focused on cultivating healthy eating habits from a young age, highlighting the dangers of ultra-processed foods.
- **Promotion of the AfriFOODlinks Project:**
 - The event served as a platform to showcase the AfriFOODlinks project, emphasizing its work on:
 - Nutrient-rich food reformulation (specifically, subsidized bread).
 - Urban agriculture.
 - School nutrition improvement.
 - The project's integration into practical workshop sessions demonstrated its real-world impact and potential.
- **Collaborative Public Health Effort:**
 - The event highlighted the importance of a multidisciplinary approach, bringing together physicians, researchers, nutrition students, educators, and civil society representatives.
 - This collaboration reinforced the collective commitment to cancer prevention and control.
- **Proactive Health Management:**
 - The event served as a powerful reminder of the importance of proactive health management and the transformative potential of nutrition in safeguarding public health

important outcomes of the World Cancer Day event for the AfriFOODlinks project:

- **Increased Project Visibility and Awareness:**
 - The event provided a platform to actively promote the AfriFOODlinks project to a diverse audience, including healthcare professionals, researchers, educators, and civil society.
 - This significantly raised awareness of the project's goals, strategies, and impact within the Tunisian public health sphere.
- **Demonstration of Project Relevance:**
 - By integrating AfriFOODlinks into the practical workshop sessions, the event effectively showcased the project's real-world applications and potential for scalability.
 - This highlighted the project's relevance to addressing critical public health issues, particularly in the context of cancer prevention and healthy nutrition.
- **Reinforced Project Alignment with Public Health Goals:**
 - The event underscored the alignment of AfriFOODlinks' objectives with broader public health initiatives, particularly in promoting healthy dietary practices and preventing chronic diseases.
 - This strengthened the project's credibility and positioned it as a key contributor



to national health strategies.

- **Research Uptake and Knowledge Dissemination:**

- Dr. Beji Chiraz's presentation, emphasizing the role of nutrition in cancer prevention and treatment, facilitated the dissemination of research-based knowledge to a wide audience.
- This promoted the uptake of evidence-based practices and fostered a culture of informed decision-making regarding nutrition and health.

- **Strengthened Partnerships and Networking:**

- The event facilitated the collaboration and networking among various stakeholders, including INNTA, Tunis Science City, the Ministry of Health, and UNICEF.
- This strengthened existing partnerships and fostered new connections, which are crucial for the successful implementation and expansion of the AfriFOODlinks project.

- **Practical Application Demonstrated:**

- The project was shown to be able to be applied in a practical setting, and not just a theoretical one.

Links Sources of The Event

- INNTA Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1194397889352953&set=pcb.1194398182686257&locale=fr_FR
- Tunis Science City Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/cite.sciences.tunis/videos/1527695764583774?locale=fr_FR
- https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1079609930872373&set=pcb.1079610497538983&locale=fr_FR
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