



Through the lens of transformation: Remarkable eye care journeys

To ensure patient confidentiality and dignity in this story, I will refer to our client as “TUMAINI”, a Swahili word meaning hope to adhere to ethical and medical standards.

Tumaini is a resident of Meru County from Kithangari Village in Imenti South Sub County. She’s eighty-five (85) years old, a mother of five who lives with her grandchildren with the responsibility of ensuring everything in the homestead runs steadily and sometimes performing daily chores for the family. The major socio-economic activity of Tumaini has been farming with a focus on cereals i. e beans and maize. In the year 2021 after harvesting the produce, she realized that she could not sort out the cereals perfectly as before and this brought some worries in her as she couldn’t afford for eye checkup. Her condition progressed with itching, a lot of pain, and sometimes a feeling of a foreign body in her eyes until one day she decided to look into the mirror and noticed a white spot in her right eye. This disturbed her a lot to the extent of her self-esteem and sometimes when it’s too sunny or too much light she could only see blurred images which affected her ability to conduct the core activities during the day. Moreover, she couldn’t identify or notice someone approaching her through the right eye, and this posed frets in her life.

In May 2022 her son decided to take her to a private eye clinic in Nkubu town to seek for eye services but unfortunately, the condition couldn’t be attended at that level only to be referred to Meru General Hospital. Tumaini hesitated to go because she feared the huge bill that would accrue if she decided to take up the choice with nobody to settle the payments but opted to loosen up and assumed the condition would vanish with time.

In December 2022 she received an announcement from Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) that AIC Health Ministries in conjunction with Christ Blind Mission (CBM) under Vision Impact Program (VIP) would offer eye screening services at the community level using a technology called PEEK to identify eye conditions and then refer patients if found to have an eye problem that required further

attention.

Tumaini Did not lose hope! She participated in the household screening but failed to pass visual acuity at the community level and was referred to a treatment outreach in Kieni



Kia Ndege dispensary in Imenti South Sub County. She was notified that the services were free and felt happy since she would no longer be spending resources to seek the services elsewhere. A follow-up was intensified through Community Health Volunteers to ensure Tumaini attends the Treatment Outreach scheduled.

On 7th December 2022, A treatment outreach was planned in Kieni Kia Ndege dispensary and Tumaini availed herself for the check-up. She presented a distance acuity of the right eye (perception of light), and a left acuity of 6/12. She passed through the treatment desk and was found to have a cataract condition on the right eye on which the



Ophthalmic Nurse (ON) prescribed her Dexagenta medication for the allergies accompanied by itchiness. A glare of hope was experienced by Tumaini since a condition that had been muddling her for years was finally discovered. Notwithstanding the treatment offered, Tumaini was referred and booked for surgeries in Muuti Kiama Health Center on 20th January 2023.

Tumaini's right eye was finally operated and was able to see clearly. After one week, a post-operation was done, and she responded well to medications. This result has boosted her esteem since clear vision is no longer an issue and she can walk freely without



fear. She's resumed her daily family chores and can be able to engage herself in her socio-economic activities.

Tumaini's story highlights the importance of cascading down eye health services to the community level enhancing accessibility of the services through the use of Peek Technology to eliminate avoidable blindness. She is an inspiration to many cataract patients since she has fought all her miseries and finally her eyes were restored to a good vision state through VIP project.

BEST PRACTICES

- Proper referrals are done by practitioners and follow-ups by CHVs.
- Correct Diagnosis and prescriptions.