

VRA Hospital to treat breast cancer

From Joseph Edu Archison, Akosombo

THE Volta River Authority (VRA) Hospital in Akosombo, will now offer breast cancer treatment services to patients.

This brings to three, the number of government hospitals which can offer comprehensive treatment for breast cancer, aside from the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra and the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in Kumasi.

The VRA Hospital would collaborate with an international NGO, MOTEC-Life in United Kingdom (U.K), to offer the treatment services to patients.

Launching the programme at a ceremony last Friday, Mr. Alex Segbefia, Minister of Health, noted that all the 10 regional hospitals, including other quasi-government and private facilities, only of-

ferred surgery for breast cancer, and referred those needing radiotherapy to Korle-Bu and KATH for further care.

"We are, therefore, happy that the VRA Hospital is coming on board in the breast cancer treatment, as it will increase the access to care for the staff and people who live in the surrounding communities," he said.

Mr. Segbefia noted that breast cancer was among the major cancers in the country, stressing that it was the second commonest cancer among women in the country.

"It forms 15 per cent of all cancers and 40 per cent of female cancers. The disease is generally common as one gets older, but the majority of breast cancer cases in Ghana are between the ages of 40 and 49 years," he disclosed.

Mr. Segbefia expressed worry that despite all

the efforts at prevention and control of breast cancer, "there remain more to do as awareness is still low".

Dr. Charles Arhinful, Team Leader at the Breast Cancer Treatment Centre at the hospital, disclosed that over 2,000 patients were recorded annually as suffering from the disease nationwide, stressing that out of the number, a total of 1,000 die.

According to him, late reporting of the disease at the various hospitals and the high cost of treatment were the major causes of the fatalities, and appealed to government to consider including the disease in the National Health Insurance Scheme.

Dr. Mrs Rebecca Acquah-Arhin, Medical Director of VRA Health Services said it was not only women who get breast cancer, but men

could also suffer the disease.

She advised the public especially women, to examine their breasts at least once every month and seek early treatment.

She cautioned people to desist from stigmatising patients suffering from the disease and rather support them for treatment.

Mr. Paul Ofori Atta, a representative from MOTEC-Life, U.K, said their largest project in Africa was their collaboration at the VRA Hospital, adding that currently some nurses of the hospital were undergoing training in U.K to come and assist the hospital.



• Mr. Segbefia (in smock), in a group photograph with the foreign partners and management of the VRA Hospital after the launch.