

Free Medical Male Circumcision Programme Benefits the Melusi Community

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The City Health Medical Centre (Leratong Hospice) in collaboration with the University of Pretoria (UP) GRT-I staff, successfully conducted a Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) programme in Melusi. The initiative targeted teenage boys while also welcoming adult men who wished to undergo the procedure. This initiative was spearheaded by Mr Lethabo Tjege and Dr Thami Shogole at The City Health Medical Centre.

University of Pretoria GRT-I fieldworkers played a key role in mobilising residents by informing eligible participants that free circumcision services would be available at UP Melusi Clinic. City Health Medical Centre was responsible for conducting the medical assessments and performing the circumcision procedures.

The programme followed a structured process, beginning with the screening and selection of eligible participants, followed by comprehensive medical assessments and the circumcision procedures. To ensure proper healing and recovery, post-operative follow-up visits were arranged. The first review took place 48 hours after the procedure on Saturday, 28 June, while the second follow-up was scheduled for Friday, 3 July.

Although the programme initially focused on teenage boys, adult men were also encouraged to participate. During implementation, it was observed that many adult men felt uncomfortable sharing the same waiting area with younger participants, which discouraged some from proceeding with the procedure. In response, separate waiting areas were created for teenagers and adults, providing a more comfortable and respectful environment for everyone.

The main objective of the programme was to improve access to safe, quality medical male circumcision services at no cost, reducing the financial burden on community members. The initiative also sought to promote healthier lifestyles among the youth and improve community health outcomes.

As part of the programme, the GRTI Community Engagement Officer, Mr Kenny Mafala spoke with several participants to understand what motivated them to undergo medical male circumcision.

One participant shared that his decision was influenced by conversations with his female colleagues. He said "I would laugh with them as they joked and called uncircumcised men names. Deep inside I knew they were also talking about me, but I guess I was not sure about doing the circumcision," he said.

The married father of two explained that, despite his initial hesitation, he is grateful that he went through with the procedure. "This has been the best decision I have ever made," he said.

The programme demonstrated the value of partnerships between healthcare providers, community organisations and academic institutions in delivering accessible healthcare services and empowering communities to make informed decisions about their health.

