



# SADC PROTOCOL@WORK SUMMITS 2019

## Voice and Choice SRHR MEDIA Template

(Zimbabwe, Bulawayo, Robin Nyembezi Muchetu March 2020)

*“Voice and Choice! Empower women, End Violence.”*

# SYNOPSIS

- ▶ Print Media-Sunday News
- ▶ The article is about women who insert traditional herbs inside their reproductive organs in a bid to remove excess fluids and have dry sex which they consider being more pleasurable.
- ▶ This article is a good example of gender awareness in that it highlights the extent at which sexually active women and girls go to in trying to please the other gender and probably highlighting the pressure that women have to please their male counterparts putting their own lives at risk.
- ▶ The duty of making sex pleasurable must not be left to women alone but a combined effort. In the same vein, the article demonstrates the risks the women take to compromise their own health.
- ▶ The story is relevant in that it brings out the dangers that come about inserting foreign objects in the organs. It is also relevant in that cervical cancer which is killing a huge number of women in the country is highlighted and women and men can learn about this reality.

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# BACKGROUND

- I wrote the story because I had heard numerous conversations where well educated women were engaging in this practice and it boggled the mind why seemingly informed women were taking part in such harmful practices. This was a sign to me that maybe as media we were not doing much in educating and informing women about the dangers of inserting herbs in the reproductive organs.
- The article also served to inform both men and women about the reality of cervical cancer in Zimbabwe. Also that people must find alternatives to inserting herbs in their organs.

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# Key Objectives

- ▶ To educate men and women on the dangers of this practise.
- ▶ To educate even the traditionalists to encourage women to ingest traditional herbs if they wished rather than inserting them in their bodies.
- ▶ To give other options to couples on how to improve their sex lives besides taking herbs that may harm them.
- ▶ To make women more conscious about their reproductive health than to be pressured to do things that please the men only.
- ▶ To also encourage women to go for screening.

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# Target Audience

- Women, men, traditional healers, herbalists, VIAC nurses
- Yes I did succeed in that there are women who have walked in asking for assistance to get to VIAC centres.
- The story was shared in some whatsapp groups and women were encouraging each other to get screened for cervical cancer and also they shared on the harmful things they had been doing-inserting herbs in their organs.

▶ Please upload pictures/Video

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# PROCESS/METHODOLOGY

- ▶ I spoke to women who had used the herbs before as they were the actual ones that participated in this harmful practice.
- ▶ Herbalists and traditionalists as they are the ones who sell the medicines.
- ▶ VIAC nurses, the ones who do cervical cancer screening and treating the women who present at health institutions.
- ▶ There are three women and one man who speak in the article.

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# IMPACT

The story had an impact because it was read by a wide audience who reacted by sharing the story on whatsapp platforms. This was evidence that some of the people who shared were affected in a way such that they decided to educate others on the gravity of that matter.

Workmates and other friends have raised concerns too and wish to be screened for cervical cancer, not because they used herbs but the general need to seek health services considering the seriousness of cancers in the country.

The story was shared on the Sunday News website and twitter page.

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# FEEDBACK

- ▶ Whatsapp discussions on the matter, were to me a form positive feedback that people were indeed reading the article.
- ▶ Some however said they would not stop using the herbs as they had worked for them and saved their marriages.

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# FOLLOW UP

- ▶ I contacted one herbalist who said some women still presented to them seeking more services maybe because of lack of information.
- ▶ I am doing an article on the number of women who have come for cancer screening since 2010 at the VIAC centre and what motivated them to come.
- ▶ Data will be obtained from the United Bulawayo Hospitals.

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