

EASIER ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON BREAST CANCER PREVENTION IN TIMOK REGION



Prof. Dr Sladjana Filipovic at the lecture



Consultation: Dr Stankovic and Minica Petrovic

BOR/ZAJECAR, SERBIA – Only 16% of malignant breast tumors in the Timok region, Eastern Serbia are currently detected at early stage when medicine can work effectively as a cure. Unfortunately breast cancer is a very ‘common’ disease in this economically depressed area.

"Breast cancer is probably not one of the main concerns for the people in this region. Most women do not think about this disease at all. They think that it will not happen to them, but to some other women. However, all women are exposed to certain breast cancer risk", says Prof. Dr Sladjana Filipovic, lead lecturer within the CRDA Reproductive Health and Family Planning (RH&FP) campaign that USAID and CHF International are conducting in the area of Eastern and Southern Serbia. She works in the Nis District on breast cancer prevention issues, and examined more than 25,000 women over fifteen years.

USAID and CHF together with community volunteers and medical professionals from the Timok District started this program through which better access to information about breast cancer is enabled. Lecturers from the Chair for Clinical Oncology, University of Nis, held trainings about breast self-examination (BSE) during March 2004 for target groups interested in spreading information throughout in the communities of Eastern Serbia.

Dr Vesna Stankovic, one of the training

participants, says that the situation is very serious and that the entire community should be alarmed. This is why journalists from the local media were also involved in this campaign. They were trained on the major issues regarding RH&FP. Biljana Glisic, a journalist with TV Zajecar prepared a show on this topic and broadcast it several times during prime-time on radio and TV.

Due to the very poor economic situation in this region and serious environmental problems people have migrated out. Trained community member Minica Petrovic says that she believes in the great importance of quality information dissemination for everybody. "Trainings that we organized and attended inspire hope that people in this area are not forgotten. USAID and CHF through the CRDA program helped us a lot and showed that they are interested in quality of life improvement for people in Eastern Serbia", concludes nurse Minica.

Prof. Dr Sladjana Filipovic is thrilled with success of this round of seminars. 45 doctors and community members have been trained. Only two weeks later 93 women were either examined or further trained by seminar attendees. Through the "Breast Self-Examination" project, USAID and CHF wish to increase number of early breast cancer detection from 16% to 20% in the next year.