

Florence: “I couldn’t afford the biopsy, so people from my village lent me the money”

“In January 2016, I started to feel weaker and weaker and I was bleeding. I went to Gutu rural hospital and the nurses told me it could be cervical cancer.

I went to Gutu mission hospital for a biopsy. I couldn’t afford it, so people from my village lent me the money and I had a biopsy done. I went to Masvingo provincial hospital where the doctor recommended removal of my uterus as I had cancer stage 2a of the cervix. I went to Muvonde hospital where I was advised to bring the biopsy results for the surgery to be done. I compared the costs of the surgery as I just don’t have money for this.

‘I try to work in my neighbours’ fields but I’m too weak. I’m lucky to have my husband who supports me and takes care of me, and my five children help me as well.’

Florence, aged 50, Gutu, Zimbabwe, June 2016

In July 2016, after this interview was taken, MSF paid for Florence to have a hysterectomy. She kept in close contact with MSF nurse mentor Sister Tendai Chigura and made regular visits to her local clinic, but, in January 2017, she was readmitted to hospital with terminal cancer. Florence died on 18 January 2017. Her husband Selestino is now volunteering with MSF to raise awareness of cervical cancer in the local community.



Florence and her husband Selestino in their home in Gutu, Zimbabwe, June 2016 © Mélanie Wenger



Near her home in Gutu, Florence talks about her situation to MSF nurse mentor Sister Mercy Mandizvo, June 2016 © Mélanie Wenger



Florence hugs MSF nurse mentor Sister Tendai Chigura. © Mélanie Wenger



March 2017 “I felt very bitter seeing my wife in such pain. I really want
don't know how fast this cancer spreads.”

Tendai Chigura, 1 March 2017
