

Study of prevalence of awareness of cervical cancer and acceptability of Pap smear screening in female patients above 25 years attending OPD in a hospital

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Abstract

Introduction: Cervical cancer is the commonest genital tract malignancy in females and has been ranked 2nd to breast cancer in India. Pap smear is used for down staging cervical cancer. Pap smear test has been effective in reducing incidence of cervical cancer by 80% and mortality by 70%. **Aims and Objectives:** 1. To study awareness of cervical cancer among female patients attending OPD. 2. To study acceptability of Pap smear among them. 3. To associate awareness of cervical cancer and acceptability of pap smear with various socioeconomic & demographic variables.

Materials and Methods: A Cross sectional interview based study regarding knowledge levels about cervical cancer is conducted among 100 female patients attending OPD at TSSHRC, Navi Mumbai. Consenting individuals were administered a structured questionnaire with multiple choices for collecting data regarding knowledge and also to detect how many of them had a pap smear done. Various socio-demographic variables like marital status, parity, age at marriage, socio-economic status, education are considered and Bio-statistician report is made. **Discussion:** Only 20% patients knew about cervical cancer and only 11% patients knew that Pap smear is done to screen for cervical cancer. Only 5% had done screening test previously.

Keywords: Cervical cancer awareness, Pap smear

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INTRODUCTION

Cervical cancer is the commonest genital tract malignancy in females and has been ranked 2nd to breast cancer in India. Cervical cancer is ranked as most frequent cancer in women in India. Unlike many other cancers, cervical cancer occurs early and strikes at the productive period of women's life. It results from infection with Human papilloma virus, commonly serotypes 16,18.^{1,2} This infection results in transformation of cervical epithelial cells, first to pre-cancerous lesions

and then to frank cancer.^{3,4,5} Major factors affecting prevalence of cervical cancer in population are economic factor, sexual behavior and degree of effective mass screening.⁶ Despite high mortality from this disease in our country, it is preventable and its morbidity and mortality could be greatly reduced using preventative health methods such as safe sexual practice and most importantly pap test. Pap smear test is currently the most widely used approach for preventing cervical cancer, via 1-3 yearly screening.^{7, 8} Pap smear is used for down staging cervical cancer. Pap smear test has been effective in reducing incidence of cervical cancer by 80% and mortality by 70%.⁹

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To study awareness of cervical cancer among female patients attending OPD.
2. To study acceptability of Pap smear among them.
3. To associate awareness of cervical cancer and acceptability of pap smear with various socio-economic and demographic variables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Group: The study consists of female patients attending OPD at Terna Super Specialty Hospital and Research Centre (TSSHRC).

Study Design: A Cross sectional interview based study regarding knowledge levels about cervical cancer is conducted among female patients attending OPD at TSSHRC, Navi Mumbai.

Sample Size: 100 females.

Duration of Study: 2 Months.

METHODS

1. All female patients attending OPD will be approached.
2. Informed written consent will be obtained from them.
3. Consenting individuals will be administered a structured questionnaire with multiple choices for collecting data regarding knowledge and also to detect how many of them had a pap smear done.
4. Various socio-demographic variables like marital status, parity, age at marriage, socio-economic status, education are considered and Bio-statistician report is made.

DISCUSSION

Only 69% patients have heard and know about use of condom and only 11% know about oral contraceptive pills. But 48% patients are having whitish vaginal discharge i.e., major factor among the patients. Similarly only 20% patients know about cervical cancer which is one of the most dangerous disease for females and only 17% patients know regarding its cure. Regarding screening test only 9% patients have heard cervical cancer screening test. Next, only 7% patients know about cervical cancer vaccine. Only 11% patients know that Pap smear is done to screen for cervical cancer. Only 8% patients have the knowledge regarding cervical cancer screening centre and out of these only 5% have done screening test previously and these all 5% are doing Pap smear test regularly.

RESULTS

This study found out that out of 100 patients, only 20% patients have heard about cervical cancer and only 11% patients know that pap smear is done to screen cervical cancer and only 5% patients had done pap smear test in the past. It was also found that higher level of socio economic status, higher age at marriage and higher level of education were positively associated with more knowledge of cervical cancer and uptake of Pap smear testing.

CONCLUSION

Although awareness regarding HPV infection, cervical cancer and Pap smear is less but my study has provided an opportunity to create awareness and perception regarding cervical cancer and has encouraged the women to increase the uptake of Pap smear testing. Creating awareness among the study group regarding cervical cancer, its risk factors and current methods of cervical cancer screening is a necessary step towards implementing effective prevention programs.

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