



A STUDY ON AWARENESS OF CERVICAL CANCER AND SCREENING IN A PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRE IN RURAL CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT

Cervical cancer is one of the most common cause of death worldwide especially among women in India. Certain studies says that among the women diagnosed with cervical cancer, around 75% of the women presents to hospital during the end stage which results in increased mortality and morbidity. Our study is prospective study regarding the awareness of cervical cancer and Pap smear among women who came to Rural PHC. In Chennai. The objectives of the study was to find about the awareness of cervical cancer and screening among the patients. Based on the data collected, we came to know that most of women who came to OPD had very less knowledge regarding the Cervical cancer and screening. Huge burden of mortality related to cervical cancer is a consequence of decades of neglect by the global health care community. Clearing the path to cervical cancer elimination needs a bold strategic action, improved community awareness, rapidly expanded workforce capacity, strengthening the health system and introduction of affordable technology.

KEYWORDS : Cervical cancer, PAP smear, screening

INTRODUCTION :

Cervical cancer is one of the most common cause of death worldwide especially among women in India. Certain studies says that among the women diagnosed with cervical cancer, around 75% of the women presents to hospital during the end stage which results in increased mortality and morbidity[1]. According to WHO in 2018, the age standardized cervical cancer incidence is 14.7 & the mortality is 9.2. However this can be prevented by using a simple screening test known as Pap smear which helps in the early detection of the carcinoma. This early detection of cervical cancer will have very good outcome and increases the survival rate of the patient [2-4]. Cervical cancer screening by PAP smear or by acetic acid helps in identifying the precancerous changes earlier such can be treated and there by preventing cancer cervix[5]. Our study is prospective study regarding the awareness of cervical cancer and Pap smear among women who came to Rural PHC. In Chennai. The objectives of the study was to get information regarding the awareness among the patients and are categorized by age, socio-economic status and education of the patient. Based on the data collected, it helps in planning and executing the awareness of Pap smear and cervical cancer among the women.

MATERIALS AND METHODS :

Our study is a prospective, hospital based study with 200 patients who came to primary healthcare centre. The main objective of the study is to know about the awareness among the public regarding cervical cancer and Pap smear.

The women were interrogated with prepared questionnaire which includes age, education, sociology-economic status, and awareness about cervical cancer and Pap smear. This study was initiated after clearance from Institutional Ethical committee of Saveetha Medical College and hospital. An informed consent was obtained from the women who participated in the study. Inclusion criteria included women between 30 and 59 years of age and those who have given informed consent and participation. Exclusion criteria included women below 30 years of age and above 60 years of age. Sample size taken in the study is 200.

A questionnaire was prepared with following details which include age, occupation, income education for assessing the socio-economic status. It also includes questions about their

awareness of cervical cancer and PAP smear screening for cervical cancer. We asked questions regarding knowledge of cervical cancer and if yes, sources of knowledge gained was asked. The questionnaire was developed by group of experts from Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology.

The questionnaire with scoring regarding knowledge of cervical cancer and screening of cervical cancer was taken from.

Knowledge Of Cervical Cancer :

If yes then, we proceed with

1. Symptoms manifestations of cervical cancer - Irregular menstrual bleeding, weight loss, bleeding after sexual activity, blood staining discharge from vagina and difficulty in passing urine
2. Risk factors for cervical cancer : Early start of sexual activity, multiple sexual partners, multiparty and infection with virus.
1 mark for each response for above question. Hence minimum is 0 and maximum is 9. It has been categorized <4 - Poor knowledge, above 5 good and satisfactory knowledge.

Knowledge For Screening Of Cervical Ulcer:

If patient answers yes for the question - Is cervical cancer can be detected early by screening? , then following questions has been asked:

1. Married, unmarried, or any women - who should be screened for cervical cancer
2. Old women >60 years, women 20- 50 years of age, or adolescent girls 12-19 years of age - Among the above mentioned , which age is group is most eligible to get screened.
3. Government hospital, Private hospital, maternity hospital, nursing homes, private hospital with attached maternity hospital, women's hospital - Where the testing is done
4. When Pap smear comes positive - Does it means positive for cervical cancer

1 mark for each response for above question number 1,2,4 and each response for question number 3 will get 1 mark each. Hence minimum is 0 and maximum is 9. It has been categorized <4 - Poor knowledge, above 5 good and satisfactory knowledge.

Once the data collection was over, we taught the women regarding the symptoms of cervical cancer and how it can be diagnosed at the early stage by screening through a simple test known as Pap smear.

RESULTS :

Table 1: sociodemographic characteristics of the participants

Demographic Characteristics	N
Age	
30 -35	17
36-40	78
41-45	45
46-50	33
51-55	18
56-60	9
Married	
Yes	184
No	16
Age At Marriage (Years)	
<16	15
17-18	42
19-20	36
21-24	39
25-26	27
>27	41
Have Children	
Yes	178
No	22
Number Of Children	
0	22
1	28
2	108
3	36
4	6
Income	
<1000	13
1001-5000	18
5001-10000	71
10001 - 15000	83
>15001	15
Occupation	
Professional	53
Business	11
Housewife	120
Others	16
Education	
No Formal Schooling	31
Secondary	59
Primary	47
College	63

Table 2 : Knowledge About Cervical Cancer And Its Screening

Knowledge	N(%)
Knowledge About Symptoms Of Cervical Cancer	
Irregular Menstrual Bleeding	54 (27%)
Blood Stained Discharge From Vagina	40 (20%)
Weight Loss	38 (19%)
Difficulty In Passing Urine	10 (5%)
Bleeding After Sexual Activity	18 (9%)
Foul Smelling Discharge	40 (20%)
Knowledge About Risk Factor For Cervical Cancer	
Early Start Of Sexual Activity	30 (15%)
Multiple Sexual Partners	40 (20%)
Multiparity	20 (10%)
Viral Infection	60 (30%)
Nil	50 (25%)
Who Should Get Tested For Cervical Cancer	

Only Married Women	126 (68%)
Unmarried Women	12 (6%)
Any Female	52 (26%)
Appropriate Age For Getting Tested	
Women >50 Years	148 (74%)
Women 20-50 Years	52 (26%)
Adolescent Girls 12 -19 Years	0 (0%)
Result Of Positive Test Means Cervical Cancer	
Yes	158 (79%)
No	42 (21%)
Source Of Information About Cervical Cancer	
Magazine	8 (4%)
Newspaper	0 (0%)
Television	0 (0%)
Relative	76 (38%)
Medical Practitioner	16 (8%)
Friend	84 (42%)
Internet	10 (5%)
Others	6 (3%)
Source Of Information About Cervical Cancer	
Screening	
Magazine	40 (20%)
Newspaper	8 (4%)
Television	4 (2%)
Relative	34 (17%)
Medical Practitioner	54 (27%)
Friend	30 (15%)
Internet	18 (9%)
Others	12 (6%)

Table 3 : Grading Of Knowledge About Cervical Cancer And Its Screening

Grouping Acc To Knowledge	N (%)
Cervical Cancer	
Poor Knowledge (<4)	114 (57%)
Satisfactory (5-6)	70 (35%)
Good (>7)	16 (8%)
Cervical Cancer Screening	
Poor Knowledge (<4)	124 (62%)
Satisfactory (5-6)	46 (23%)
Good (>7)	30 (15%)

DISCUSSION :

Pap Smear is a screening test for cervical carcinoma. Presence of any atypical cells in the cervix suggestive of any premalignant or malignant lesion can be identified by Pap smear. It is a very simple procedure which causes mild pain during the scraping of cells from cervix for smear but it is very unlikely to cause significant pain or discomfort. It can be done on OPD basis itself.

Among the conducted study most patient falls between the age group 36-40, 39percent (79 patient) are between 36-40 years of age. Regarding the marital status 92 percent (184 patients) are married and rest falls under non married category. Around 21 percent of the patient were married at the age group of 17- 18 years of age, which forms the major category.

Among the study participants, nearly 89 percent (178) of the patient are having children. Number of children each participant have are as follows: 11 percent of the patient were nulliparous, 14 percent had one child, 54 percent had two children which the major category, 13 percent had 3 children and only 3 percent had 4 children which forms the lowest category. Majority of patient were housewives (60 percent).

Regarding the knowledge about the symptoms of cervical cancer, 27 percent of the patient know about the irregular menstrual bleeding, 20 percent know about the blood stained discharge from vagina, 19 percent know about the weight loss as one of the symptom of cervical cancer. Only 5 percent of the

patient know that difficult in passing urine as a symptom. About 68% of the patient thought only married women should be tested for cervical cancer.

About 74 percent of the patient answered the age for getting tested for cervical cancer is above 50 years of age. Nearly 79 percent of the patient are believing result of positive PAP smear test is positive for cervical cancer. Majority of the patients around 42 % got information about cervical cancer from friend and 27 percent got information about cancer screening from medical practitioner. Overall 114 patients (57%) had poor knowledge regarding cervical cancer, 70 patients (35 %) were satisfactory and 16 patients (8%) had good knowledge. Similarly, Overall 124 patients (62%) had poor knowledge regarding cervical cancer screening, 46 patients (23 %) were satisfactory and 30 patients (15%) had good knowledge.

Since the awareness of cervical cancer and Pap smear screening is very poorly executed, it leads to increase in incidence and prevalence of cervical cancer. The women between the age group of 40-50 are at high risk of developing cervical cancer. As the premalignant lesion usually occurs 5-10 years before onset of the symptoms, it is advised women before 45 years should have done minimum one Pap smear. [7,8]. American cancer society has advised screening method for cervical cancer i.e Pap smear every 3 years and HPV DNA test with Pap smear every 5 years.[9]. The prevalence of cervical dysplasia on screening is found to vary from 1.5-6% in India[10,11].

CONCLUSION :

Based on the data collected, we came to know that most of women who came to OPD had very less knowledge regarding the Cervical cancer and screening. Huge burden of mortality related to cervical cancer is a consequence of decades of neglect by the global health care community. Clearing the path to cervical cancer elimination needs a bold strategic action, improved community awareness, rapidly expanded workforce capacity, strengthening the health system and introduction of affordable technology. Elimination is within the reach of all countries.[12]

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