



## KNOWLEDGE AND HEALTH SEEKING BEHAVIOR REGARDING SCREENING OF CERVICAL CANCER AMONG WOMEN IN SELECTED AREAS OF KAMRUP, ASSAM: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY.

### Community Health Nursing

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### ABSTRACT

**Background :** Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable yet still widely prevalent cancers affecting women worldwide. It arises from abnormal cell growth in the cervix, most commonly caused by persistent infection with high-risk types of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Cervical cancer remains a major public health concern, especially in low- and middle-income countries where screening coverage is limited. **Methods :** A descriptive study design was used to accomplish the objectives. Study was undertaken on 100 women of 30-49 years residing a rural areas of Kamrup, Assam by using non-probability convenience sampling technique. Participants were selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Self-structured knowledge questionnaire and 5-point likert scale was used to assess the level of knowledge and health seeking behavior respectively. **Results :** The study revealed that out of 100 women, most of them, most of the women, i.e., 51(51%) possessed moderately adequate knowledge, 33(33%) possessed inadequate knowledge and 16(16%) possessed adequate knowledge regarding screening of cervical cancer among women. For health seeking behaviour, 45(45%) had moderately desirable health seeking behavior, 44(44%) possessed desirable health seeking behavior and 11(11%) had undesirable health seeking behaviour regarding screening of cervical cancer. **Conclusion :** Based on the analysis and findings of the study, majority of the women had moderately adequate knowledge and moderately desirable behavior regarding screening of cervical cancer. So, the investigator concluded that the need for continuous health education, early screening initiatives, and community-based awareness programme and to improve the knowledge regarding the importance of regular screening of cervical cancer to reduce the burden of cervical cancer among women.

### KEYWORDS

Knowledge, health seeking behavior, women, screening, cervical cancer.

### INTRODUCTION

Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable yet still widely prevalent cancers affecting women worldwide. It arises from abnormal cell growth in the cervix, most commonly caused by persistent infection with high-risk types of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Cervical cancer remains a major public health concern, especially in low- and middle-income countries where screening coverage is limited. Early detection through regular screening is the most effective strategy to reduce both the incidence and mortality associated with this disease. In many developed countries, organized cervical cancer screening programs using Pap smear and HPV testing have led to a substantial decline in incidence and mortality. However, in low- and middle-income countries like India, the burden remains high due to limited access to screening services, low awareness levels, cultural inhibitions, fear of procedures, and inadequate health infrastructure. As a result, many women are diagnosed at advanced stages when treatment options are limited and survival rates are significantly reduced.

### OBJECTIVES

- To assess the level of knowledge regarding screening of cervical cancer among women in selected areas of Kamrup, Assam.
- To assess the health seeking behaviour regarding screening of cervical cancer among women in selected areas of Kamrup, Assam.
- To find out the correlation between knowledge and health seeking behaviour regarding screening of cervical cancer among the women in selected areas of Kamrup, Assam.
- To find out the association between knowledge regarding screening of cervical cancer among women with selected demographic variables
- To find out the association between health seeking behavior regarding screening of cervical cancer among women with selected demographic variables.

### METHODS AND MATERIALS

A descriptive study design was used to accomplish the objectives. Study was undertaken on 100 women of 30-49 years residing a rural areas of Kamrup, Assam by using non-probability convenience sampling technique. Participants were selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Self-structured knowledge questionnaire and 5-point likert scale was used to assess the level of knowledge and health seeking behavior respectively. The conceptual framework used for the

study is the Modified Health Belief Model (1950).

### RESULTS

#### Findings related to demographic variables

The study revealed that 31(31%) were aged between 30 – 33 years, 89(89%) were married, 32(32%) studied up to primary school, 37(37%) had monthly family income of between Rs.18,859-31,435, 48(48%) were unemployed, 59(50%) had health facilities at 1 – 5 km (by transport), 88(88%) had heard about screening of cervical cancer and 41(46.6%) had healthcare providers as source of information about screening of cervical cancer.

#### Findings related to knowledge score

The findings of the study showed that majority, 51(51%) possessed moderately adequate knowledge, 33(33%) possessed inadequate knowledge and 16(16%) possessed adequate knowledge with mean and standard deviation 8.7 and 3.05 respectively.

#### Findings related to health seeking behavior

The study results showed that 45(45%) had moderately desirable health seeking behavior, 44(44%) possessed desirable health seeking behavior and 11(11%) had undesirable health seeking behavior with mean and standard deviation 44.1 and 10.50 respectively.

#### Findings related to correlation between knowledge and health seeking behavior regarding screening of cervical cancer

In correlation, the result showed that mean score of knowledge was 8.70±3.05 and the mean score of health seeking behavior was 44.1±10.50. The calculated Karl Pearson's Correlation value of  $r = 0.532$  shows a moderate positive correlation between knowledge and health seeking behavior statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$  level which clearly establishes that when knowledge regarding screening of cervical cancer among women improves or increases then ultimately their health seeking behavior also improves adequately.

#### Findings related to association between levels of knowledge regarding screening of cervical cancer among women with selected demographic variables

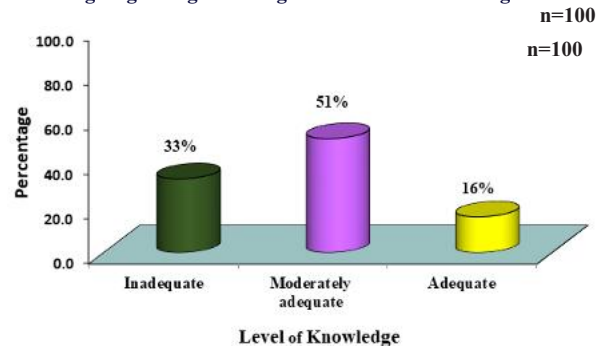
In association, the result showed that there was no significant association between the knowledge with selected demographic variables of age in years, marital status, monthly family income, occupation, availability of health facilities, heard about screening of cervical cancer and source of information at  $p < 0.05$  level and  $p < 0.01$

level and there was significant association between the knowledge with selected demographic variables of educational level.

**Findings related to association between levels of health seeking behavior regarding screening of cervical cancer among women with selected demographic variables**

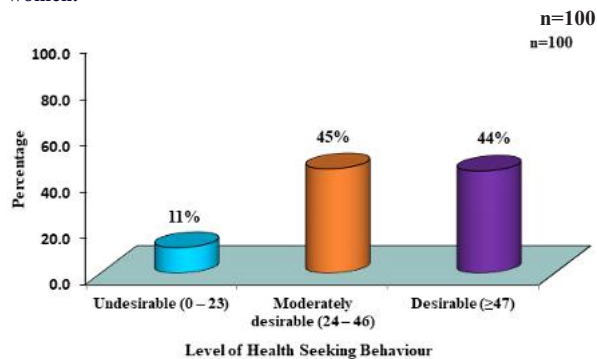
In association, the result showed that there was no significant association between the health seeking behavior with selected demographic variables of age in years, marital status, monthly family income, occupation, availability of health facilities, heard about screening of cervical cancer and source of information at  $p < 0.05$  level and  $p < 0.01$  level and there was significant association between the health seeking behavior with selected demographic variables of educational level.

**Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of knowledge regarding screening of cervical cancer among women.**



**Figure 1: Percentage distribution of level of knowledge regarding screening of cervical cancer among women**

**Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of health seeking behavior regarding screening of cervical cancer among women.**



**Figure 2: Percentage distribution of level of knowledge regarding screening of cervical cancer among women**

**Table 3: Correlation between knowledge and health seeking behavior regarding screening of cervical cancer among women**

Variables	Mean	S.D	Karl Pearson's Correlation "r" & p-value
Knowledge	8.70	3.05	$r = 0.532$
Health Seeking Behavior	44.1	10.50	$p = 0.0001, S^*$

$p < 0.05, S^* -$  Significant

**DISCUSSION**

This study was conducted to assess the knowledge and health-seeking behavior regarding screening of cervical cancer among women. The findings revealed that most respondents i.e., 51% of women had moderately adequate knowledge, 33% had inadequate knowledge, and only 16% had adequate knowledge regarding cervical cancer screening. This indicates that although many women have heard about cervical cancer screening, detailed knowledge about risk factors, symptoms, prevention, and screening methods remains insufficient.

In relation to health-seeking behavior, 45% of respondents had moderately desirable behavior, 44% had desirable behavior, and 11%

had undesirable behavior. This suggests that many women are willing to seek healthcare, but some may still face barriers such as fear, lack of awareness, embarrassment, or limited motivation to undergo screening.

The study showed a moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.532$ ) between knowledge and health-seeking behavior, which was statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ . This finding indicates that improved knowledge regarding cervical cancer screening can positively influence women's health-seeking behavior and increase participation in screening practices.

**CONCLUSION**

The findings of the study showed that out of 100 women, 51(51%) possessed moderately adequate knowledge, 33(33%) possessed inadequate knowledge and 16(16%) possessed adequate knowledge regarding screening of cervical cancer.

The analysis reveals that demographic variables educational status ( $p = 0.036$ ) had statistically significant association with level of knowledge regarding screening of cervical cancer among women at  $p < 0.05$  level and the other demographic variables did not show statistically significant association with knowledge regarding screening of cervical cancer among women at  $p < 0.05$  level.

In association between health seeking behavior regarding screening of cervical cancer among women with selected demographic variables, it was observed that the demographic variable education level ( $p = 0.010$ ) had statistically significant association with level of health seeking behavior regarding screening of cervical cancer among women at  $p < 0.05$  level and the other demographic variables did not show statistically significant association with health seeking behavior regarding screening of cervical cancer among women at  $p < 0.05$  level.

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**Competing interests**

The author declare that they have no competing interests

**Consent for publication**

Not applicable

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