

Study on Knowledge Regarding Various Aspects of Carcinoma Cervix in Rural Areas of Aligarh

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Abstract

Cancer Cervix is the second most common cancer in the world. Cervical cancer is the leading cancer and the leading cause of cancer deaths in women in developing countries. Overall, the mortality rates in developing countries are about four times (80-85%) than those in industrialized countries. The aim of this study is to find the knowledge and attitude of cervical cancer among married females of rural areas of Aligarh. The study was a cross sectional study. It was done in July –August, 2019. All the married females were included who gave consent for the study. 100 females were included of registered areas of Rural Health and Training Centre, Department of Community Medicine, J.N. Medical College, AMU. Pre-testing of the questionnaire was done on 10 respondents; after which necessary changes were made, and the questionnaire was re-administered. Data entry was done. More than half of the females under study thought vaginal discharge and menstrual irregularity as the main symptoms of cervical cancer. Oral contraceptive pills and multiple sexual partners were considered main risk factors in more than 50 percent of females. Regarding preventive measures, good genital hygiene was known to most of the females under study. Surprisingly, PAP smear was unknown to almost all females under study.

Keywords: Carcinoma cervix, symptoms, risk factors.

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INTRODUCTION

Cancer Cervix is the second most common cancer in the world [1]. Cervical cancer is the leading cancer and the leading cause of cancer deaths in women in developing countries. One woman dies of cervical cancer every 8 minutes in India [2]. The majority of deaths due to cervical cancer occur in women who were never screened or treated as well as those who had an early sexual debut, a history of multiple sexual partners, and a high number of live births [3]. The highest incidence and mortality rates are in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and South Asia. Overall, the mortality rates in developing countries are about four times (80-85%) than those in industrialized countries [4]. The aim of this study is to find the knowledge and attitude of cervical cancer among married females of rural areas of Aligarh. Cervical cancer can be prevented by identifying pre-cancerous lesions early using repeated Pap smear screening and treating these lesions before they progress to cancer. Prevention, early diagnosis and treatment reduce mortality due to cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is a deadly disease once it reaches the

invasive stages, but out of all the female genital tract cancers, it is the only preventable cancer if detected at its early stages. Population-based screening with Pap smear is an important secondary preventive measure for cervical cancer that leads to a high-cure rate among cervical cancer patients.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was a cross sectional study. It was done in July –August, 2019. All the married females were included who gave consent for the study. 100 females were included of registered areas of Rural Health and Training Centre, Department of Community Medicine, J.N. Medical College, AMU. Pre-testing of the questionnaire was done on 10 respondents; after which necessary changes were made, and the questionnaire was re-administered. Data entry was done.

RESULTS

Table-1: Knowledge on symptoms of cervical cancer (N=100)

Symptoms	Numbers
Menstrual abnormality	52
Vaginal discharge	57
Pain	31
Vaginal itching	43
backache	32
Vaginal sores	43
Painful sex	15
Weight loss	24
Post coital bleeding	8
Bladder and rectal involvement	0

Table-2: Knowledge on risk factors of cervical cancer

Risk factor	N=100
Early marriage	32
Early pregnancy	35
Repeated pregnancy	24
OCPs	62
Multiple sexual partners	59

Table-3:

Preventive measures	N=100
Good genital hygiene	70
Use of condom	46
PAP test	1

DISCUSSION

Regarding the symptoms, as shown in Table-1, more than half of the females under study thought *vaginal discharge and menstrual irregularity* as the main symptoms of cervical cancer. *Pain, vaginal itching and vaginal sores* were less commonly known to females under study. Females were also aware of *backache and weight loss*. In a study conducted in Gujarat [5], regarding knowledge of the symptoms of cervical cancer, 94.2% respondents stated vaginal discharge as one of the symptoms. The percentages of respondents who mentioned menstrual abnormality and pain as symptoms were 86.9 and 66.6, respectively. In another study by Nganwai *et al.*, [6], 77.7 % and 92.4% knew that common symptoms of cervical cancer include post-coital bleeding, inter-menstrual bleeding and abnormal leucorrhoea or bloodstained vaginal discharge. Another study showed similar finding (menstrual abnormality-80.6%) [7] among female health personnel.

Regarding risk factor as shown in Table-2, *oral contraceptive pills and multiple sexual partners* were considered main risk factors in more than 50 percent of females. Gujarat study showed [5] that only 11.5% respondents were aware of multiple sexual partners as one of the risk factors of cervical carcinoma. In a study of Ali *et al.*, [8], 45% mentioned multiple partners and other promiscuous behaviour as the most

common risk factor. In a study carried out by McCarey *et al.*, [9], 41% of nurses mentioned multiple sexual partners as a risk factor for cervical cancer. In the Gujarat study [5], 73.9% mentioned early age at pregnancy as one of the risk factors for cervical cancer. Nganwai *et al.*, [6] in their study mentioned that 81.8 and 85.6% of respondents knew that first sexual intercourse at a young age and having multiple sexual partners were risk factors for cervical cancer.

Regarding preventive measures as shown in Table-3, *good genital hygiene* was known to most of the females. Surprisingly, PAP smear was unknown to almost all females under study. Gujarat study [5] revealed 88.4% respondents had knowledge regarding Pap test as one of the preventive measures. Similar findings (83%) were documented in a study carried out by Mutyaba *et al.*, [10]. In a study by Ali *et al.*, [8], 75% knew that Pap smear is the screening test for cervical cancer.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present findings suggest a very low level of knowledge on cervical cancer, its risk factors and symptoms among the females under study. Hence, the health care associated department should take utmost care to provide the knowledge and encourage them by giving proper health education. The routine method of undergoing the screening test is advised and it has to be inculcated in all aspects of the health care department.

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