

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Cervical Cancer among women attending Primary Health Care Centre in Al-Madinah city

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Abstract— Introduction: Cervical cancer ranks as the 8th most frequent cancer among women in Saudi Arabia. It accounts for 2.6% of all new case. In developing countries, only about 5% of women have been screened with pap smear. The important key in the management of cervical cancer is early detection of the cancer. Objectives: To determine the knowledge, attitudes and practices toward cervical cancer among women attending primary health care in Al-Medina city .

Methods : A cross sectional study was conducted in four selected PHC in Al-medina city, march 2014 . The questionnaire was obtained from previous validated study to determine the level of knowledge, attitude and practice of cervical cancer. Face to face interview using the questionnaire were carried out among 350 married women attending PHC clinics during study period.

Results: The mean age of the participants was 36.37±12.68 Yrs. The majority of participants belong to (31 – 40 Years) and most of participants had secondary schooling certificate and were not formally working .Of the study participants, 66%, 55.1% and 84.8% had insufficient score for Knowledge, attitude and practice respectively. Most of women (61.1%) were heard about cervix cancer and the major source of knowledge were oral communication and television. The majority of the participants don't know the causative agent of cervical cancer and only (4.9%) of women were considered STD whereas (3.1%) were considered papilloma virus .Only (34.9%) participants heard about Pap smear and (4.9%) had ever done Pap smear test.

Conclusion: The knowledge , attitude and practice regarding cervical cancer in this study were low. There is a need to increase the awareness regarding cervical cancer among Saudi women.

KEY WORDS-- Cervical cancer, attitude, knowledge, practice.

1 INTRODUCTION

cervical cancer Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer in women , and the seventh most common cancer worldwide. It accounts for nearly 8% of all cancers that affecting women.⁽¹⁻³⁾

In Saudi Arabia ,current estimates indicate that every year 241 Saudi women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 84 die from the disease. Cervical cancer is the 8th most common cancer among women and the 8th most common cancer among women between 15 and 44 years of age.⁽⁴⁾ It accounts for 2.6% of all new cases.⁽⁴⁾

Epidemiological studies have clearly established human papillomavirus (HPV) infection as the central cause of invasive cervical cancer (ICC). This is the second most common cancer among women worldwide and the most common female cancer in large areas of the developing world where an estimated 80% of new cases arise.⁽⁵⁾

WHO 2007 guidelines for cervical cancer recommend the conventional Papanicolaou (pap) test as a routine screening test in the female population.⁽⁶⁾ Cervical cancer is one type of cancer that can be prevented.⁽⁷⁾

The important key in the management of cervical cancer is early detection of the cancer, however most of the women in developing nations present with advanced disease when nothing can be done for them.⁽⁸⁾ The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force(USPSTF)

strongly recommends screening for cervical cancer in women ages 21 to 65 years with cytology (Pap smear) every 3 years or, for women ages 30 to 65 years who want to lengthen the screening interval, screening with a combination of cytology and human papilloma virus (HPV) testing every 5 years.⁽⁹⁾

Most of advanced cervical cancer cases and mortality related to cervical cancer occurs among women who have never undergone screening.⁽¹⁰⁾

In developing countries, only about 5% of women have been screened for the disease with pap smear compared to 40%-50% in developed countries.^(11,12) Cervical cancer screening is easy ,inexpensive and there is worldwide agreement that screening programs for cervical cancer is a necessity.⁽¹³⁾ It effectively reducing the incidence of the cervical cancer by 75%-90%.⁽¹⁴⁾

Lack of awareness and knowledge about cervical cancer among women is the most common reason for late presentation and advanced stage at diagnosis of cervical cancer.⁽¹⁵⁾

There are limited number of studies that concerned about knowledge, attitude and practice of cervical cancer screening in Saudi Arabia. There is no published study about awareness of cervical cancer screening among women in Al-medina city .

The aim of this research is to determine the know-

ledge, attitudes and practices toward cervical cancer among women in Al-medina and to recommend a national screening program for cervical cancer.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive cross sectional study. The study was conducted in Al-medina city , Saudi Arabia ; march 2014. The questionnaire was translated to Arabic language and validated by back translation. Face to face interview using the questionnaire were carried out among 350 married women attending PHC clinics during study period.

The Questionnaire consist of :

First questions on background information (age, educational level , occupation and parity)

The next questions were divided to assess knowledge, attitude and practice regarding cervical cancer.

All data were analyzed by SPSS software statistical program. p-value less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant throughout the study.

3 Results

The mean age of the participants was 36.37±12.68 Yrs. The majority of participants belong to (31 – 40 Years) and most of participants had secondary schooling certificate.(table -1)

Sixty one point one percent of the study participants heard about cervical cancer and the major source of this hearing were from oral communication (36%) followed by television (19.7%), school (2.9%). .(table -2)

For the causative agent of cervical cancer, majority of the participants (89.1%) responded as they don't know the cause of cervical cancer. (4.9%) responded the causing agent as STD followed by Papilloma virus (3.1%) and old age (2.6%).Vaccination is the preventive method mentioned by (9.1%).

(34.9%) heard about Pap-smear and a majority of the participants(79.7%) affirmative responded that suspected lesion can be detected early if screen has been done. .(table -3)

(96.6%) of study participants were in favor of national screening program availability in future and (75.1%) willing to go for pap smear testing.

Twelve percent of the study participant are taking hormonal contraceptives which is mainly oral contraceptive pills for more than five years. The majority of the study participants (95.1%) did not do a pap smear ever in their life .

Of the study participants, 66%, 55.1% and 84.8% had insufficient score for Knowledge, attitude and practice respective-

ly.(table -4)

Table-1:

Socio-demographical data of the study participants

Variable	Fre- quency	(%)
Age:		
<30 Yrs.	106	30.3
30 – 40 Yrs.	142	40.6
41 – 50 Yrs.	53	15.1
>50 Yrs.	49	14.0
Total	350	100
Educational level:		
Illiterate	5	1.4
Primary schooling	23	6.6
Intermediate schooling	42	12.0
Secondary schooling	145	41.4
University graduate or more	135	38.6
Total	350	100
Occupation:		
Unemployed	238	68.0
Student	46	13.1
Employed	66	18.9
Total	350	100
Parity:		
No birth	49	14.0
1 – 2 births	83	23.7
≥3 births	218	62.3
Total	350	100

Table-2

Study participant's knowledge about cancer of uterine cervix and the sources of the knowledge

Knowledge variable	Response of the participants	
	Frequency	(%)
Heard about uterine cervix Cancer:		
Yes	214	61.1
Source of cervix cancer knowledge:		
Oral communication	126	36.0
News papers	1	0.3
Television	69	19.7
Radio	2	0.6
Doctor or hospital	6	1.7
School	10	2.9
Don't know	136	38.9

Table-3

Knowledge about the causes of cervix cancer and its treatment and preventive measures (n=350)

Knowledge variable	Response of the participants	
	Frequency	(%)
Heard about Pap smear:		
Yes	122	34.9
No	228	65.1

Table-4

Classification of score of the study participants about knowledge, attitude and practice of cervical cancer on the basis of cut off point

Variable	Insufficient n(%)	Sufficient n(%)
Knowledge	231(66%)	119(34%)
Attitude	193(55.1%)	157(44.9%)
Practice	296(84.6%)	54(15.4%)

4 DISCUSSION

There are no data on the knowledge, attitude and practices of Al-medina women about cervical cancer. Therefore this cross-sectional interview-based study was conducted in 2014 among 350 women at randomly selected primary health care centers in Al-medina to determine their knowledge, attitude and practices regarding cervical cancer and screening.

The current study is the first to explore the level of knowledge, attitude and practice of cervical cancer in Al-medina city. The findings reflect a poor level of knowledge. Such findings have been reported by a number of previous studies.⁽¹⁶⁻²⁰⁾

High mortality of the disease recorded in most developing countries has been attributed mostly to late presentation consequent to poor level of awareness.⁽²¹⁾

Cervical cancer is a preventable disease, and a key point of cervical cancer prevention is early detection of the precancerous lesion by proper cervical screening.⁽²²⁾

Kim et al⁽²³⁾ conducted a study in Chicago in a sample consisting of 159 Korean-American women. Twenty-six percent of the studied women had never heard of the Pap smear test which is a less percent compared to current study where (65.1%) responded not heard of Pap smear test.

The present study showed that only 34.9% of the studied women were aware of the cervical screening, however, only 4.9% had ever had the test. Assoumou et al.,⁽²⁴⁾ reported

only 27.9% of the study participants had heard about cervical cancer prevention through screening. Among these, 65.1% had had a Pap smear previously. Assoumou et al.'s⁽²⁴⁾ finding about the preventive screening of cervical cancer is less than the current study but doing Pap smear testing is more compared to current study findings. Khalid H. Sait⁽²⁵⁾ in Jeddah reported that 67.6% of the women were aware of pap smear, however, only 16.8% had ever had the pap smear.

In rural South Africa 18% of women were reported to have ever had Pap smear test done.⁽²⁶⁾ Compared to current study a low Pap smear screening reported by B. A. Omotara et al.,⁽²⁷⁾ where Only 2.3% have heard of Pap smear test and had one done on them.

In Jeddah⁽²⁵⁾ study where most of the participants had got their information from media or doctor, in the current study most of those who had got their information from the oral communication or television.

A high proportion (41.4 %) of this study population were having only secondary school educational level. This may contribute to the low level of knowledge. Roberts et al.,⁽²⁸⁾ found a positive relationship between the education level and awareness of cervical screening. In the current study (26.9%) of the responded showed a sufficient awareness of cervical cancer whereas university or more education level responded showed a more percentage of sufficient awareness and they accounted for (71.4%) of the total sufficient awareness score of (34%).

In the current study knowledge score of cervical cancer was low, and there is needs to improve cervical cancer knowledge as the cancer rate increases yearly.

Human papilloma virus (HPV) infection is the main cause for cervical cancer.⁽⁵⁾ Several studies have reported that knowledge of HPV was low in developing countries⁽²⁹⁻³²⁾ compared with some developed countries.^(33,34) The results of the current study are concordant with the existing literature on HPV knowledge. Indeed, only 3.1% of the current study participants had heard about HPV and 96.9% of the women were not aware of HPV as a risk factor for cervical cancer. This finding is in accordance with Jeddah⁽²⁵⁾ study where a majority (85.6%) of the women were not aware of HPV which is the main risk factor for cervical cancer.

In Jeddah⁽²⁵⁾ study, only (16.8%) of the women had ever had a Pap smear. In the current study, only (4.9%) of the participants had ever had a Pap smear. In Kim et al's⁽²³⁾ study, the most common cause for not having had cervical cancer screening as absence of cervical cancer symptoms.

Three fourth of the responded(75.1%) in current study were willing to carried out Pap smear test and this results are in accordance with the finding of Jeddah study⁽²⁵⁾ where (58.4%) of the participants accepted the cervical cancer screening, and they are willing to have the test .

A number of studies found a positive correlation between cigarette smoking and cervical cancer .⁽³⁵⁻³⁶⁾ Fortunately, most of the women in the study (92%) were non smoker.

In a Nigerian study,⁽¹⁹⁾ (80.4%) of women had a good attitude to cervical cancer screening but their level of practice was low (15.4%).The current study shows a negative attitude (55.1%) and a poor practice (84.6%) regarding cervical cancer. Similar findings have been reported by a number of researchers.^(37,38)

The most encouraging result of the current study is that majority (96.6%) are in favor of availability of national screening program in future.

5 – Conclusions and recommendation

The women in Al-medina city are not aware about cervical cancer and the importance of screening of cervical cancer. The knowledge level on cervical cancer among Saudi women is still low in compare with developed countries.

Current study highlights the lack of knowledge poor attitude and preventive practice about cervical cancer in Al-medina women.

More than 60% of the participants heard about the cancer and towards prevention practice, 90% don't know how to prevent but as for the screening concern 34.9% heard about Pap-smear and 4.9% ever done it.

This study shows a poor knowledge of study participants about the causative agent as more than 89% participants unaware of the causes of cervical cancer.

A significant correlation between knowledge, positive attitude towards cervical cancer with age, education and occupation of the participants found. Whereas no statistical significant correlation found between preventive practice of cancer and basic characters of the participants.

There is a need to increase awareness among Saudi women regarding cervical cancer risk factors and prevention.

All eligible women should be encourage by their health care worker for cervical cancer screening .

Media and Non Government Organization should be involved in this task .

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