



“A Study to assess the Awareness on Cervical Cancer and its Prevention among Women of Reproductive Age residing in selected area of Punjab.”

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ABSTRACT: Cervical cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer and the third leading cause of cancer death in women worldwide so, its awareness is very much essential. Cervical cancer is malignant neoplasm of the cervix. It is primarily caused by human papillomavirus (HPV). It may present with vaginal bleeding and more other signs and symptoms as in advanced stages. It becomes a deadly disease once it reaches the invasive stage but very much preventable if detected early. The occurrence of cervical cancer can be reduced by creating awareness among women regarding its screening and preventive measure. A non-experimental cross-sectional descriptive survey was used to assess the awareness of Cervical cancer and its prevention among women of reproductive age and to find out association between awareness of cervical cancer and its prevention. Convenience sampling technique was used to select 200 subjects. The data was collected through a structured knowledge questionnaire to assess awareness regarding cervical cancer and its prevention. Ethical permission was taken from institute prior to study and informed consent was taken from every subject prior to data collection. The findings revealed that 3.5% of subjects had good awareness regarding cervical cancer and its prevention whereas 75% of subjects had average awareness and 22.5% had poor awareness regarding this. 44.5% of subjects were possessing better awareness among all others subjects. The association between awareness of cervical cancer and its prevention with age, marital status, education, occupation was significant ($p < 0.05$).

Key words: Cervical cancer, Reproductive age women, Screening for cervical cancer, Awareness, Preventive measure for cervical cancer.

INTRODUCTION

Cervical cancer is a cancer of the cervix, the organ connecting the uterus and the vagina. It is predominantly caused by human papilloma virus (HPV) which is a sexually transmittable infection-causing pathogen. Therefore, effective interventions on prevention of HPV infections can prevent cervical cancer [1,2].

In 2018, an estimated 570 000 women were diagnosed with cervical cancer worldwide and about 311000 women died from the disease. Early diagnosed of cervical cancer is one of the most successfully treatable forms of cancer, as long as it is detected early and managed effectively [3].

Cervical cancer is a typically slow-growing cancer that may not have symptoms but can be early diagnosed by doing a Pap smear. The burden of disease due to transmissible diseases such as HIV and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is increasing especially in developing countries. Research has shown that HPV is the cause of about 70% of all cervical cancers [4].

Cervical cancer causes loss of productive life both due to early death as well as prolonged disability. Cervical cancer screening offers protective benefits and is associated with a reduction in the incidence of invasive cervical cancer and cervical cancer mortality. Eventually after several decades cervical cancer screening may no longer be warranted [5].

The World Health Organization (WHO), United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) and the American Cancer Society (ACS) recommended that all eligible women should have cervical cancer screening at least once every three years [6].

Even today millions of women in the developing countries are never screened for cervical cancer in their entire lifetime. Routine cytological screening should be offered to all women above the age of 21 years who are sexually active for at least 3 years. Screening combined with vaccination can substantially reduce the worldwide cervical cancer mortality [7].

The papanicoloau test, or pap smear test is the most widely used screening test for cervical cancer worldwide. In United States, pap smear have reduced the death related to cervical cancer by 75% in the past 50 years, which was at one time the leading cause of death of women in US. This is mainly because of the awareness of the women regarding cervical cancer and its screening tests. There are another screening test such as VIA (visual inspection with 4% acetic acid) and HPV test [8].

PROBLEM STATEMENT

A Descriptive Study to Assess the Awareness on Cervical Cancer and its Prevention among Women of Reproductive Age (15-45years) Residing in Selected areas of Punjab.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the awareness on cervical cancer and its prevention among women of reproductive age.
- To determine the association of awareness on cervical cancer with socio-demographic variables.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

ElamuruganSujindra, Rajendran P et.al (2016) conducted a cross-sectional survey to determine the awareness, attitude, and practice of Indian women toward screening for cervical cancer. 200 women belonging from two categories comprising 100 high school teachers and 100 housewives. The structured questionnaire was developed and comprised 15 questions. Four questions were framed to gather the socio-demographic details and the remaining 11 were pertaining to knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP). Mean age of the teachers was 38.2 ± 13.2 years and of the housewives 40.38 ± 12.2 years. The study results revealed that all the teachers had heard about cervical cancer, 98% heard about the availability of some screening method for cervical cancer, and 79% had heard about Pap smear. Among the housewives, 72% were knowing about cervical cancer, 70% about the availability of screening methods, and only 38% had heard about Pap smear. The practice of cervical cancer screening methods was not adequate among teachers and housewives. However, their knowledge and attitude were welcoming [9]

Robert M. Kei, Julius K et.al (2016) conducted a descriptive cross-sectional study to assess the challenges of cervical cancer screening among 151 women of the reproductive age. Random sampling was used to select study subjects. Data was collected by using a structured interviewer-administered questionnaire. The study revealed that Knowledge on cervical cancer and screening was very low among women, because 20.5% knew about vaginal bleeding and 15% knew about having multiple sexual partners as a risk factor. There was relationship between the level of education and belief on the cure for cancer ($P = 0.000$), those who were more educated believed that cervical cancer can be cured at early stages while those with less education believed that cancer cannot be cured. Knowledge on cervical cancer and screening was low, hence poor practice on screening among women was observed [10].

Ms. S. Shakila, Dr. S. Rajasankar, Dr. N. Kokilavani et.al (2015) conducted a descriptive study to assess the Knowledge regarding Cervical Cancer among women. The convenient sampling technique was used to select fifty subjects. The data was collected by administering the structured knowledge questionnaire. The study findings revealed that 35(70%) women had inadequate knowledge and 15(30%)

had moderate knowledge regarding cervical cancer. Some of the demographic variables like educational status, religion and source of information are significantly association at ($p < 0.05$) with knowledge score of women. The study stated that it is necessary to make nursing staff aware of cervical cancer. Health care professional has to create awareness of disease can educate masses and increase health seeking behavior of women [11].

Jansirani Siddharthar, Bhuvaneshwari Rajkumar et.al (2014) conducted cross sectional survey to assess knowledge of cervical cancer and its prevention. Women attending Gynecology Out-Patient Department (OPD) in a tertiary care hospital were selected as study subjects. Information about their knowledge of cervical cancer, awareness of its prevention and their socio demographic characters were collected. Mean age of the study population was 40.45 ± 12 years. Less than half of the study population (178, 44.5%) knew about cervical cancer. Less than one-fourth of the population were knew about screening services for prevention of cervical cancer, and majority (389, 97.2%) were not aware of vaccination as prevention for cervical cancer. The study showed that population had poor knowledge about cervical cancer and was unaware of the concept of prevention. Hence extensive health education to the public is needed regarding cervical cancer and its prevention [12].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design: Cross-sectional Descriptive Survey.

Research Setting: The study was conducted in Civil Hospital of Mohali, Punjab.

Population: All reproductive age (15-45 years) women who visited in Civil Hospital of Mohali, Punjab.

Sample: Women who attending Gynecological OPD in civil Hospital of Mohali, Punjab.

Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample.

Sample size: 200 women

Sampling Criteria

Inclusion criteria:

- Women with the age 15-45 years were taken as sample.
- Women who able to communicate in English, Hindi and Punjabi.
- Women who were willing to participate in the study.
- Women who present at the time of data collection.

Exclusion criteria:-

- Women who related with health profession.
- Women who were mentally challenged.

Description of the tool:

The tool used in this study had two parts.

Part A: This tool consist of 10 questions about socio-demographic variables.

Part B: This tool consist of 30 questions to assess the awareness on cervical cancer and its prevention among reproductive age (15-45years) women. Total 30 items were there. Each correct response was assigned score one and incorrect response was assigned score zero.

Validity of tool:

To ensure content validity of tools, it was checked by 10 experts from the department of obstetrics and gynaecological nursing.

Reliability of tool

The reliability of self structured tool was estimated by cronbach's alpha and tool was found to be reliable($r=0.8$).

RESULT:**Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Demographic Variables****N=200**

characteristic	Category	f	%
Age in year	15-20	54	27
	21-26	38	19
	27-32	44	22
	33-38	32	16
	39-45	32	16
Marital status	Unmarried	65	32.5
	Married	135	67.5
Residence	Rural	134	67
	Urban	66	33
Education	No formal education	08	4.0
	Primary	32	16
	Secondary	51	25.5
	Senior secondary	87	43.5
	Graduate and above	22	11
Occupation	Student	57	28.5
	House maker	110	55
	Self employed	16	8.0
	Private employed	15	7.5
	Government employed	02	1.0
History of cancer in family	Yes	15	7.5
	No	185	92.5

Table 1 shows that majority of the subjects were falling in the age group of 15-20years (27%) and 38 (19%) were falling in age group of 21-26 years, whereas 44 (22%) were falling in age group of 27-32years

and only 16% subjects were falling in age group of 33-38years to 39-45years of age. Majority (67.5%) of the subjects were married. Maximum (67%) of the subjects were living in rural area. As per education majority of the subjects (43.5%) were educated up to secondary education and few (4%) subjects were lacking of any type of formal education. Distribution of subjects as per their occupation reveals that majority of the subjects (55%) were homemaker. Maximum (92.5%) of the subjects were not had any family history of cancer.

TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AWARENESS REGARDING CERVICAL CANCER AND ITS PREVENTION AMONG WOMEN OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE **N=200**

SR.NO.	CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Poor awareness	045	22.5
2.	Average awareness	148	74
3.	Good awareness	007	3.5

Maximum score= 30, Minimum score=0

Mean percentage score = 44.5% **Mean±SD = 13.37±3.62**

Table 2 shows that maximum subjects 148(74 %) had average awareness about the cervical cancer and its preventive measures. Whereas 45(22.5%) subjects were having poor awareness and only 7(3.5%) subjects had Good Awareness about the cervical cancer and its prevention. Distribution of subjects according to their mean that was 13.37 and the standard deviation was 3.62 whereas mean percentage score was 44.5%.

Table 3: Association of awareness regarding cervical cancer and its prevention with selected demographic variables. **N=200**

Demographic variable	Below Median (f)	Above Median (f)	Chi-square value	df	p value
Age in years					
15-20years	19	35	13.1	4	0.01*
21-26years	19	19			
27-32years	29	15			
33-38years	22	10			
39-45 years	17	15			
Marital status					

Married	85	50	16.5	1	0.00**
Unmarried	21	44			
Residence					
Rural	70	64	0.94	1	0.75
Urban	36	30			
Education					
No Formal Education	4	4			
Primary	21	11		4	0.006**
Secondary	36	15	14.6		
Senior secondary	35	52			
Graduate or Above	10	12			
Occupation					
Student	16	41			
House-maker	74	36			
Self employed	9	7	25.78	4	0.00**
Private employed	7	8			
Government employed	0	2			
Any History of cancer in family					
Yes	8	7			
No	98	87	0.00	1	0.97

Table 3 depicts the association of awareness regarding cervical cancer and its prevention with selected demographic variables. It was concluded that there was a significant association between awareness regarding cervical cancer and its prevention with demographic variables like age, marital status, education and occupation which were statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance where as other variables such as residence and family history of cancer were statistically non significant at 0.05 level of significance.

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to assess the awareness on cervical cancer and its prevention among women of reproductive age. The findings of the present study revealed that, maximum subjects 148(74 %) had average awareness about the cervical cancer and its preventive measures. Whereas 45(22.5%) subjects were having poor awareness and only 7(3.5%) subjects had Good Awareness about the cervical cancer and its prevention. In this study the results shows that only 36(18%) of the respondents were aware that cervical cancer is the most common gynaecological cancer and 57(28.5%) subjects had knowledge that cervical cancer is viral infection. Only 53(26.5%) respondents recognized PAP smear test as most reliable method to investigate cervical cancer. Archana James, Niharika Dhiman et.al carried out similar study revealed that 93% of the respondents had poor knowledge regarding cervical cancer and only 3.25% respondents had knowledge about Pap smear as a screening technique but no one had undergone the test voluntarily. The finding of present study concluded that there was a significant association between awareness regarding cervical cancer and its prevention with demographic variables like age, marital status, education and occupation where as other variables such as residence and family history of cancer were statistically non significant.

Conclusion

The finding of the study concluded that only 3.5% of samples had good awareness about cervical cancer and its prevention, which in turn indicates that there is a strong need for health awareness program to reduce the occurrence of cervical cancer in future. This study finding serves as a reference material to the Government of India to formulate health awareness programmes with regard to prevention, control and management of cervical cancer.

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