

## **Knowledge, Attitude and Prevalence of Cervical Cancer and Pap Smear Screening Tests at Well-Women Clinics Conducted by the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) Offices in Matara District**

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Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer in women and a leading cause of death, especially in resource-limited settings. It's preventable with early detection, like the Pap smear test. Factors like gender, socio-economic status, culture, and education influence knowledge and practices regarding cervical cancer prevention. The study aimed to identify the participants' attitudes in the cervical cancer screening test, to examine the basic knowledge regarding cervical cancer and pap smear tests, to investigate the prevalence of cervical cancers among women in well-women clinics and to assess preventive measures for cervical cancer. This retrospective descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 403 participants on Well-women clinics attendees in 17 MOH offices from January to December 2023. Prevalence was estimated as a retrospective study and data was collected as a prospective study. The questionnaire was pretested on 10 women who attended the pap smear screening test. Data was collected using a pre-tested, Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) questionnaire. The collected data was entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and SPSS statistical software version 25 was used to analyze the data. The results indicated that most of the participants, 147 (36.5%), had low knowledge of cervical cancer. Meanwhile, 133 participants (33%) demonstrated a moderate level of expertise, and 123 participants (30.5%) displayed a high level of knowledge regarding cervical cancer. The final results of the knowledge of cervical cancer screening reflected the majority; 187 (46.4%) of study participants had poor expertise in cervical cancer screening. While 130 (32.3%) had a moderate knowledge level, 86 (21.3%) participants had good expertise towards cervical cancer screening. The prevalence of cervical cancers among women in well-women clinics in Matara district 2023 is 0.01%. Although, the knowledge level of both cervical cancer and screening tests was poor. Therefore, there is a need to conduct awareness programs about cervical cancer and screening to improve their awareness.

**Keywords:** Cervical cancer, pap smear screening test, prevalence, knowledge, attitude