

## **Factors associated with the uptake of cervical cancer screening among married women in Udangoda Grama Niladhari Division, Ratnapura district, Sri Lanka**

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Cervical cancer is a major public health problem throughout the world. It is the second leading cause of cancer related deaths among women in Sri Lanka. Screening is one of the most cost effective strategies for disease control.

This study aimed to identify the factors associated with the uptake of Cervical Cancer Screening among married women in age at or above 35 years in Udangoda Grama Niladhari Division, Ratnapura District in Sri Lanka.

A descriptive cross-sectional interviewer administered questionnaire survey was conducted among 170 women. Data were analyzed in SPSS 16.0 statistical software. Statistical significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ .

Mean age of the participants was 52.6. Out of them 54.7 % (n=93) had passed O/L and 60 % (n=160) were unemployed women. Almost 87.6 % (n=149) had heard of cervical cancer (CC) and 87.1 % (n=148) had of heard cervical cancer screening (CCS). A very small proportion of participants had heard of risk factors, signs and symptoms and the link between HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) and CC, that is 2.3 % (n=4), 11.2 % (n=19) and 2.9 % (n=5) respectively. Electronic media and midwives play a great role in providing information on CC and CCS. Even though a majority of them had of heard the disease and screening method, screening uptake was very low among the participants 19.4 % (n=33).

Age and educational level played key roles in determining the awareness and attitude of the women. At the same time proper awareness and positive attitudes affected to determine the screening behavior of the respondents. The proportion of women who had ever been screened was significantly higher among those who demonstrated a positive attitude to screening. 78.8 % (n=26),  $p = 0.001$ , respondents were aware of the disease 100.0 % (n=33),  $p = 0.016$ , and those who were aware of cervical cancer and its screening were 100.0 % (n=33),  $p = 0.001$ ).

These findings highlighted a busy schedule in life: 43.5% (n=74) and lack of knowledge: 30.6% (n=52) and were the most common barriers towards utilizing screening services. There is an urgent need to improve proper awareness programs, and changing attitude to overcome low attendance for screening services in Sri Lanka.