

## **Knowledge and attitude of pap smear testing and associated socio demographic factors among women between ages of 21 to 65 years attending the OPD at Divisional Hospital, Kondavil**

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**Background:** Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer worldwide and one third of cervical cancer burden is to be found in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. It is the second largest cause of female cancer death in Sri Lanka. Human Papilloma virus is the major etiological agent of cervical cancer. Cervical cancer can be prevented by early detection and human papilloma virus vaccination. In Sri Lanka even though prevention services are available, most of the cancer cases are reported at a late stage.

**Methodology:** This was a descriptive cross sectional study to assess knowledge and attitude of Pap smear testing and associated socio demographic factors among 248 women between ages of 21 to 65 years attending the OPD at Divisional Hospital, Kondavil. Interviewer administered questionnaire was used and collected data was analysed by SPSS package.

**Results:** Majority of the participants was age  $\leq 35$  years 169 (64.1%) and ever married women were 214 (86.3%). All most all were Hindu 237 (95.6%) and majority were housewife 180 (72.6%). Among the total participants 178 (62.6%) were studied up to O/L. We found that only 44 (17.7%) women ever had heard about Pap smear test and only 60 (24.2%) aware about cervical cancer. Among the women who had heard about Cervical cancer answered correctly as sexual intercourse 18 (30%), multiple sexual partners 43 (71.7%) and smoking 15 (25%) are the risk factors for cervical cancer. All those who knew about cervical cancer answered as early detection is good for treatment outcome. Attitude was assessed among the 44 participants who knew about Pap smear test, 42 (95.5%) showed positive attitude to the question "Screening helps in prevention of carcinoma of the cervix" and 33 (65%) believed that screening causes no harm. Majority of them 33 (77.3%) had answered positively as if screening is free and causes no harm they will screen. The study found that knowledge ( $p \leq 0.046$ ) of Pap smear test were significantly associated with age. There were no significant correlation between knowledge and other sociodemographic factors such as educational level, parity and duration of marriage.

**Conclusions:** There is a poor knowledge about Pap smear test and cervical cancer among the study population. But the participants who had awareness on Pap smear test showed positive attitude towards the test.

**Keywords:** Pap smear, knowledge, women, Jaffna