

Abstract:

Invasive cervical cancer (ICC) is the leading cause of cancer-related death among women in developing countries. Population-based cytologic screening and early treatment does reduce morbidity and mortality associated with cervical cancer. Some of the factors related to the success of such a program include awareness about cervical cancer and its screening. The objective of this study was to assess knowledge and practice about cervical cancer and Pap smear testing among cervical cancer and noncancer patients using a structured questionnaire to obtain information. Fifty-one percent of the respondents were aware of cervical cancer while 32% knew about Pap smear testing. There were no significant differences in knowledge between cervical cancer and noncancer patients. Health care providers were the principal source of information about Pap testing (82%). Only 22% of all patients had had a Pap smear test in the past. Patients aware of cervical cancer were more likely to have had a Pap smear test in the past. The level of knowledge is low among ICC and noncancer patients. There is need to increase the level of knowledge and awareness about ICC and screening among Kenyan women to increase uptake of the currently available hospital screening facilities.