ABSTRACT

Background:
Cervical cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related death among women in developing countries. Population-based screening and early treatment reduces morbidity and mortalityassociated with cervical cancer.

Aim:
The objective of this study was to determine the factors influencing cervical cancer screening knowledge and uptake of screening among women in Embu County.

Methods:
A cross-sectional study design was adopted. A multi-stage cluster sampling technique was used to obtain the required sample size of 269 respondents. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The study was approved by the Kenyatta National Hospital-University of Nairobi Ethics Review Committee (KNH-UoN ERC).The study was conducted between January 2014 and February 2014. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS Version 17.0.

Results:
The study findings revealed that 82.2% of the women were aware about cervical cancer, while 73.2% knew about cervical cancer screening. Among all the women interviewed, only 25% had ever been screened. There was a statistically significant association between awareness of cervical cancer and the age of respondents p=0.031. A significant association between screening uptake and employment status was observed p=0.027.

Conclusion:
The study shows that the uptake of cervical cancer screening was low among the women in Embu, county. This was despite the fact that most of the women have heard about cervical cancer and cervical cancer screening. Lack of understanding and lack of clear information on the disease was a barrier to screening uptake. There is need therefore to study the underlying reasons as to why women do not go for screening in a purely qualitative study