

Knowledge of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) and cervical screening HPV test among South Asian immigrant women in Australia

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Background:

Cervical cancer, commonly caused by Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), has significant burden in Asia. This study examined the knowledge of HPV and cervical screening among South-Asian immigrant women in Australia to determine associated sociodemographic factors.

Methods:

A cross-sectional internet-based survey was completed by a convenience sample of women with South-Asian background, residing in Queensland. Outcome variables were awareness of HPV and the HPV test (Yes/No). HPV knowledge was assessed via a 16-item aggregated scale (score 0-16; higher scores indicating better knowledge). Five individual items queried knowledge of the HPV test and one item actual cervical screening uptake. One-way ANOVA was used to study differences in HPV knowledge among sociodemographic groups. Logistic regression analysis was used to study factors associated with HPV, the HPV test as well as cervical screening uptake.

Results:

Of 148 participating women, 55%(n=86) had heard about HPV, 84.5%(n=123) had heard of cervical cancer screening, and 56.8%(n=84) had participated in screening. The mean HPV risk factor knowledge score was 5.3 (S.D: 5.7). Higher knowledge scores were significantly associated with high educational level, being in employment, English language proficiency, and having access to private health insurance. Cervical screening uptake was significantly higher in women who were aware of HPV (OR=2.63, 95%CI: 1.36-5.19, p=0.005). Only one third of participants (n=49) were aware that now an HPV test is used for cervical screening; while 89% (n= 44) were able to correctly identify the test's purpose; 42.9% (n= 21) the frequency and age recommendations, 28.6% (n=14) the meaning of 'positive HPV test result' and 30.6% (n=15) the availability of self-sampling option.

Conclusion:

While just over 50% of women had heard about HPV, only 33% knew that HPV testing was used to screen for cervical cancer. Key target groups for future interventions to increase awareness of HPV were identified by this study.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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