Perceptions of Cervical Cancer Screening in Rural Guatemala

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Cervical cancer (CC) is the second most common cause of cancer-related mortality in the developing world11. Globally, the incidence of CC is 13.1 per 100,000, with the highest incidence of cervical cancer seen in sub-Saharan Africa, Melanesia, Latin America and the Caribbean, southcentral Asia and southeast Asia11. While it is proven that cervical cancer is a leading cause of cancer-related death in women in developing countries, there is little data regarding the perceptions of screening and how this may affect the likelihood that women will seek care. This study aimed to assess the attitudes, perceptions and beliefs of cervical cancer screening in women of Rural Guatemala. A cross sectional mixed method analysis was done using a survey given to 170 women in San Pedro La Laguna in Sololá, Guatemala. Results found that none of the indigenous language speaking patients and only half of the bilingual (Spanish/Indigenous language) patients had knowledge of HPV. 46.4% of women screened had received a pap smear at some point in their lives, which is slightly above the national average (39.3%)2. 97% of women indicated that they believed receiving regular pap smears is important. Overall, results of this study display a positive perception of cervical cancer screening by indigenous women, indicating that efforts should be made to move toward implementation of low-cost cervical cancer screening methods.

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