A Community-Based Response: Cervical Cancer Education & Screening

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review has shown that cervical cancer ranks as the 2nd most frequent cancer among women in Jamaica, and the 1st most frequent cancer among women between 15 and 44 years of age. Data is not yet available on the HPV burden in the general population of Jamaica. Age was the most important factor in determining Pap smear use. A higher level of education was related negatively to never having had a Pap smear. Unemployment was more strongly related to the lack of a recent smear. A woman who is illiterate and poor had the greatest risk of never having been screened.

The approaches used to ensure regular Pap testing must be tailored to socio-economic, psychosocial, medical, and motivational factors that may change over a woman's life. Careful descriptions of the determinants of Pap testing at different stages are needed; the success of Pap-emphasizing programs designed without this information may be severely limited.

EXISTING PROBLEM

A significant portion of Jamaican women are not undergoing screening for cervical cancer despite established cervical cancer screening programs that are widely available. This has resulted in a high incidence of cervical cancer mortality especially for women 15 to 44 years of age. Current estimates indicate that every year 383 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 151 die from the disease. Women in rural areas are at higher risk of dying from the disease.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is two fold: (1) to engage and educate women living in a small rural area known as Strawberry Valley - population 5000- on the effectiveness of Pap smear screening in preventing cervical cancer (2) develop a collaborative and innovative Action Plan with various stakeholders such as community members, health care professionals, policy makers and advocates to support effective cervical cancer prevention and control.
METHODS

Discussions were held with all stakeholders. A literature review was done, and a population survey administered to 150 women who attended the clinic in a neighbouring town from April to May of 2010. An interviewer administered the questionnaire in order to assess the women’s knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding cervical cancer and cervical cancer screening.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Great efforts were made to encourage screening in Strawberry Valley. The fact that the town does not have a clinic, and the closest one is an hour’s drive away, continue to adversely affect the number of women who actually get screened. Mobile units were used for rapid achievement of higher screening coverage in such a rural area. The Ministry of Health covered the costs for all diagnostic tests and the salaries of 2 nurse practitioners. As most of the women are farmers, flexibility in scheduling had to be considered.

Additionally, the church plays an important role in the community; therefore the pastor was an important vehicle and driving force in encouraging annual check-ups and screening as a prevention measure.

In this case the community care activities entailed:

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<th>Setting</th>
<th>Primary Prevention</th>
<th>Secondary Prevention</th>
<th>Tertiary Prevention</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Home</td>
<td>• Information, education and communication on cervical cancer and screening</td>
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<td>• Church</td>
<td>• Women empowerment groups</td>
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<td>• Support Group for those diagnosed</td>
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<td>• Community-based rehabilitation</td>
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OUTCOME

Findings were consistent with other studies showing that cervical cancer incidence and mortality are associated with poverty, poor access, rural living and low education levels. 35% of the women had never had a Pap smear and only 15% had a Pap test within the last year. Innovative methods of reaching the women should be considered as traditional means have not been effective in increasing Pap smear or cervical cancer screening.
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY!

1. Do you visit a doctor regularly?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Sometimes

2. Does your doctor talk about cervical cancer screening?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Sometimes
   - I cannot remember

3. Are educated about cervical cancer & the causes?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Somewhat

4. Where would you go to get a Pap smear?
   - I would go to my regular doctor
   - I would go to a health centre
   - I would go to a clinic on a day I knew they were doing Pap tests
   - I would go to a neutral location where I would feel comfortable
   - I don’t know where to start

5. My last Pap test was:
   - In the last year
   - More than a year ago but less than two years ago
   - More than five years ago
   - I’ve never had one
What’s a Pap test?

6. Anyone in your family had cervical cancer or abnormal pap?
   Yes
   No
   Not sure

7. Do you smoke?
   Yes
   No
   Sometimes

8. Are you sexually active?
   Yes
   No
   Sometimes

8. Are you in a committed relationship?
   Yes
   No

9. How far do you travel to see your doctor?
   One hour or more
   Less than one hour
   Less than half an hour
   I don’t travel

10. Would you get screened if the services were closer to your home?
11. Would you get screened if someone you know was also getting screened?

Yes
No
Maybe

12. Would you get screened if all expenses were paid for by the government or a third party?

Yes
No
Maybe

13. Do you currently have paid employment?

Yes, full time
Yes, part-time
Yes, I am self-employed
No

14. What level of income do you currently receive?

More than $25000 per year
$15000 to $20000 per year
$10000 to $15000 per year
Less than $10000 per year
15. What is the highest level of education achieved?

College diploma or higher
Finished Secondary School
Some Secondary
Finished High School
Some High School
Finished Primary School
Other_____________________________

16. Please indicate your age range:

15-19
20-29
30-39
40-49
50-59
60+

17. Do you have any additional comments or notes?

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!
Reference


