

WP-4 CERVICAL SCREENING STUDY PROTOCOL FOR ESTONIA

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ADHERENCE TO CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING IN ESTONIA

BACKGROUND. Organised population-based cervical cancer screening was implemented in Estonia in the year 2006. According to the National Cancer Strategy, personal invitations to the organised cervical cancer screening programme are mailed to all insured women in the age group of 30 to 59 years with a 5-year interval after a negative test. Women diagnosed with cervical cancer, women without health insurance and women having had a Pap-smear in past 12 months are excluded from the list of invitees. The adherence rates to the organised cervical cancer screening programme have remained very low (a mean population-based coverage of 12-13% in all age groups) regardless media campaigns twice a year. The incidence of primarily detected cervical cancer has remained the same since the year 2000 as well as the number of primarily detected cancer cases diagnosed in a localised stage at the time of diagnosis. One of the reasons for no changes in the trend of cervical cancer incidence and stage at diagnosis could be low attendance to cervical cancer screening programme.

AIMS OF THE STUDY. The objective of the present study is to find out the reasons for low adherence rates in the cervical cancer screening programme. The reasons for non-attendance will be studied with the help of a questionnaire mailed together with the invitation to screening. These reasons have not been studied earlier.

METHODS. The target group for the questionnaires will be a sample of women in the target group of the screening programme. The sample will be stratified according to age. The sample size will be calculated according to the attendance rates in different age groups and with the presumption of a 50% response rate. The questionnaire will be mailed together with a covering letter. The covering letter will encourage women to respond regardless their intention to participate in the programme. The questionnaire includes questions for the possible non-attendance linked with the administrative problems within the programme (unsuitable reception hours, wish to register via e-mail or web-page, etc) and questions asking about factors associated with the participant's knowledge and background characteristics (lack of knowledge about the test and its indications, considering the test unnecessary or of no benefit, considering oneself not to be at risk for cervical cancer, low socioeconomic status, age, etc). As Estonia has a minority of Russian-speaking population, the survey questions and the covering letter will be translated into Russian. The covering letter and the questionnaire both in Estonian and Russian will be mailed together with the invitation to screening and a return envelope with a post tax paid. The survey will be carried out with the help of the Estonian Health Insurance Fund and the returned questionnaires will be coded and filed by a person contracted at the Estonian Cancer Society. The analysis will be carried out at the National Institute for Health Development.

RESULTS EXPECTED. The results of the analysis will be used in order to map the problems associated with the organisation of the screening programme and in order to identify the reasons associated with the participants' lack of knowledge about the usefulness of screening, fear of the test, etc.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESULTS. According to the results of the analysis, possibly needed changes in the organisation of the programme will be identified, the screening programme will be modified accordingly and the media campaigns to different target groups will be tailored and organised in order to make them more efficient.

TIMETABLE

Detailed study plan, negotiations with different partners, drafting the questionnaire	Jan – Sept 2009
Drafting covering letter, translation of questionnaires into Russian	Oct – Nov 2009
Pilot study (60 questionnaires to a random sample from different age groups)	Dec 2009
Stratified sample from the population registry, printing of the questionnaires	Jan – Mar 2009
Mailing the questionnaires, data coding and entering from the returned questionnaires, media coverage	April – Dec 2010
Data analysis	Jan – Apr 2011
Report, information dissemination	May – Aug 2011

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. *Have you heard about the cervical cancer screening programme?*
 - 1 yes
 - 2 no
2. *Do you fully understand the enclosed invitation and leaflet describing the screening programme?*
 - 1 yes
 - 2 no
3. *Do you plan to participate in the cervical cancer screening programme?*
 - 1 yes
 - 2 no
4. *Listed below are some possible reasons for non-attendance, please encircle as many as needed*
 - 1 I have just had a regular check-up at my gynaecologist
 - 2 I do not have time for it
 - 3 the reception hours are not suitable
 - 4 the clinic is too far from my living-place
 - 5 the waiting-time is too long
 - 6 I am afraid to give a test
 - 7 my uterus has been removed
 - 8 I do not think it is necessary
5. *How would you like to register for the screening?*
 - 1 by phone
 - 2 by e-mail
 - 3 via web
6. *Where would you like to have the Pap-smear taken?*
 - 1 at the women's clinic
 - 2 at the family doctor's office
7. *How would you like to be informed about your test result?*
 - 1 by phone
 - 2 by mail
 - 3 by e-mail
 - 4 from a midwife or a doctor
8. *When did you last visit your gynaecologist?*
 - 1 less than a year ago
 - 2 less than five years ago
 - 3 more than five year ago
 - 4 don't remember
9. *If your family doctor would remind you about participation in the screening, how would you feel?*
 - 1 happy that he/she is concerned about my health
 - 2 I don't care
 - 3 I wouldn't like it
 - 4 I don't know
10. *Where would you like to get information about the screening programme?*
 - 1 from TV
 - 2 from women's magazines
 - 3 from family doctor/family nurse
 - 4 together with a personal invitation sent by mail
 - 5 other....
 - 6 I do not need more information

11. Which of the following factors are risk factors for cervical cancer?

	Yes	No	I don't know
Smoking			
Many sexual partners			
HPV			
No regular check-ups			
STD			

Now we would like to answer some questions about your life and health

12. Your age...years

13. Your nationality.....

14. What is your marital status?

- 1 married/cohabitant
- 2 single
- 3 divorced
- 4 widowed

15. Are you currently in paid work?

- 1 yes
- 2 I am retired
- 3 I am unemployed
- 4 I study
- 5 other

16. Are you a daily smoker?

- 1 yes
- 2 no, I have never smoked
- 3 no, but I have been a daily smoker earlier

17. How many times have you given birth? ...

18. Have you ever had sexually transmitted diseases (gonorrhoea, chlamydiosis, trichomonosis)?

- 1 yes
- 2 no
- 3 don't know

19. Have you ever used contraceptive pills?

- 1 yes
- 2 no
- 3 don't know

20. How many sexual partners have you had in your lifetime?

21. Your place of residence

- 1 big town
- 2 small town
- 3 countryside