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Common Action

DELIVERABLE 02 - LATVIA

**The possible influence of the medical staff
involved in the organized cervical cancer screening
on the responsiveness to the centrally issued
invitations in Latvia**

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INTRODUCTION

Goals of the Study

- To survey the awareness, motivation and readiness of medical staff to perform activities aimed at increasing the responsiveness to the organized cervical cancer (CC) screening invitation letters and improving the effectiveness and rate of the screening program.
- To identify the existing issues and problems preventing the involvement of medical staffs in the screening program so that the issues could be eliminated to significantly increase the responsiveness to the screening and its overall effectiveness.

In this report

- This report provides the descriptive and preliminary results of the detailed analysis data obtained in the surveys of Ob/Gyn and GP based on the same analysis methodology for both groups.
- Detailed analysis of the data will be concluded and results published in national and international journals.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Type of the study: descriptive – cross-sectional

Target group

Certified specialists who practice in Latvia and implement the screening program:

- gynecologists-obstetricians (Ob/Gyn),
- general practitioners (GP).

Method of the study

A survey based on a structured anonymous questionnaire with 29 closed questions and grouped around:

- social and demographic issues and daily activities in the context of the CC screening,
- the understanding of screening and prevention in general,
- the understanding of Latvia screening module and the personal self-assessment.

The permission to carry out the study was received from the Ethics Committee prior to the start of the study.

The study data were gathered between May 2011 and July 2011 through a questionnaire

- **Questionnaires for Ob/Gyn** were distributed and returned at a single moment on 13 May 2011 during the conference of the Latvian Association of Gynecologists and Obstetricians.
- **Questionnaires for GP** (randomly selected from the overall list of Latvian general practitioners) were mailed with an enclosed paid return pre-addressed envelope for the completed questionnaire.

Data processing

- Descriptive analysis: September 2011 – February 2012
- Software: MS Excel 2007, SPSS 19 software,

SURVEY RESULTS

Descriptive part

- **213** questionnaires distributed at the Conference of Ob/Gyn; **158** questionnaires were returned and it is **74% responsiveness**, which is **32%** of all **486** Ob/Gyn in Latvia who had a valid practice certificate as at January 1, 2011.
- **933** questionnaires were sent to GP; **213** questionnaires were returned and it is **23% responsiveness**, which is **15%** of all **1455** (contracts with State: 1399 of them) GP in Latvia, who had a valid practice certificate as at January 1, 2011.

Description of the Ob/Gyn group

- Average age of those involved in the study: **51** (52.9 years for all Ob/Gyn in Latvia),
- Females **94%**, males **6%**,
- Average years of work experience: **30.5** years,
- Location of practice: city – **96.2%**, country - **15.1%**,
- **98.1%** in their daily practice advise women on CC prevention issues,
- **36.6%** provide **10 or more** consultations per week.

Description of the GP group

- Average age of those involved in the study: **52.3** (51.5 years for all GPs in Latvia),
- Females **92%**, males **8%**,
- Average years of work experience: **20.5** years,
- Location of practice: city – **79.3%**, country – **37.1%**,
- **44.6%** in their daily practice advise patients on CC prevention issues,
- **7.4%** provide **10 or more** consultations per week.

The understanding of screening and prevention in general and Latvia screening module

- ✓ **Meaning of screening** *“Every resident of a certain age group is personally invited by an institution of a state health care organization to perform a certain diagnostic examination.”*
 - **54.4% Ob/Gyn** and **34.3% GP** selected the correct answer.
 - **87.4% Ob/Gyn** and **90.6% GP** selected the cytological examination as the screening test CC.
- ✓ **Latvia screening program** *“Since 2009 in Latvia, the following three types of oncologic screening have been in place: cervical, breast and colorectal cancer screenings, and the applicable screening tests are: cytological smear, mammography and hidden blood in feces.”*
 - **52.8% Ob/Gyn** and **84.4% GP** are fully informed about **all three** screening tests.

✓ **CC organized screening program characteristics**

- Women 25 - 70 years age are involved: **85.5% Ob/Gyn** and **64.6% GP** selected the correct answer.
- Cytological testing of the cervical mucous membrane once in three years: **82.4% Ob/Gyn** and **73.7% GP** selected the correct answer.
- An invitation letter to participate sent out by the Health Payment Center (HPC): **88.7% Ob/Gyn** and **91,1% of GP** selected the correct answer.
- The reading of the screening smear is paid by the HPC, provided and performed by a doctor (OB/Gyn or general GP) who has no contract with the HPC: **54.1% Ob/Gyn** and **19.7% GP** selected the correct answer.
- The state pays for the screening smear reading and the visit to doctor provided and applies only by a doctor who has a signed contract with the HPC: **66% Ob/Gyn** and **79.3% GP** selected the correct answer.
- Expected correct responses to the questions depend on the age of the Ob/Gyn : RR 0.96; 95% CI: 0.93-0.99, $p < 0.05$ (0.047)
- Lower probability of correct answers grows with the age of the gynecologist included in the study group: older age Ob/Gyn are not well informed about the "like logistics" of the Latvia's CC screening module but at the same time, they do more consultations due to longer practice years
- This finding is not found when analyzing the data of the GP group of this study.

✓ **Knowledge and attitude regarding CC prevention**

- **58.3% Ob/Gyn** and **36.6% GP** believe that the vaccination against HPV is useful.
- **20% Ob/Gyn** and **2.3% GP** (5.5% - can not answer) do not believe that the screening would be effective enough to decrease the CC rates of morbidity and mortality.
- **71.2% Ob/Gyn** and **63.8% GP** believe that the combination of the cytological screening examination of cervix and the vaccination against HPV would make it possible to avoid cervical CC.
- **17.9% Ob/Gyn** and **33.4% GPs** believe that existing inflammatory processes in vagina do not have an effect on the results of cytological smear reading.
- **64.8% Ob/Gyn** and **21.1% GP** know that the cytological examination has to be repeated within six months only if the primary cytological result was CIN1 (LSIL).

✓ **Self-Assessment of responders**

- **85.8% Ob/Gyn** and **76.1% GP** acknowledge that the role of the Ob/Gyn in the screening program is very significant.
- **55.1% Ob/Gyn** and **30.7% GP** acknowledge that the role of the GP in the screening program is very significant.
- **29.6% Ob/Gyn** and **2.3% GP** believe that they have complete knowledge about the CC screening
- **67.9% Ob/Gyn** and **59.6% GP** are satisfied with their knowledge regarding CC and prevention while **11.6% Ob/Gyn** and **14.1% GP** do not want to increase their knowledge in this field.

CURRENT CONCLUSIONS

- SURVEY RESULTS are in accordance with initially expected results: *“Results will show the professionals groups’ knowledge, awareness, understanding tasks of screening program and show ways for new inputs to improve screening program for the second three years round that will be started from 2012”*
- We believe that the study data and results would be representative and referable to the overall community of Latvian Ob/Gyn and GP.
- Knowledge and practice of Ob/Gyn and GP regarding the CC prevention issues can certainly be improved and should be critically self-assessed by each doctor personally.
- A systemic approach should be created and maintained nationally for the improvement of knowledge of doctors about the prevention of CC.

OTHER WORK RESULTS

✓ **Presentations and dissemination of results**

- 6th Congress of Latvian Gynecologists and Obstetricians, Riga, Latvia, 13 – 15 October, 2011 – ORAL PRESENTATION
- 4th International Cancer Control Congress, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 3 – 5 November, 2011 – POSTER PRESENTATION
- Early tumors detection research group conference, University of Latvia, Riga, 7 December, 2011 – ORAL PRESENTATION
- Press meeting due to ECCA Cervical cancer prevention week, Riga, Latvia, 23 January, 2012 – press release, ORAL PRESENTATION
- Scientific Conference of University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia, 2 February, 2012 – POSTER PRESENTATION
- EUROCHIP meeting, Ispra, Italy, 27 March, 2012– ORAL PRESENTATION
- EBCOG (European Board and College of Obstetrics and Gynecology) congress, Tallinn, Estonia, 9 – 12 May, 2012 – ORAL PRESENTATION

✓ **Two scientific papers are under preparation and planned to submit.**

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