

Pap smear screening in perimenopausal & postmenopausal women in rural set up

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Introduction

Cervical cancer has become the most common cancer in women claiming about 72825 lives per year, in India. The initial changes that may occur in some cervical cells are not cancerous. However, these precancerous cells form a lesion called dysplasia or cervical intraepithelial neoplasia. Dysplasia is a common condition and the abnormal cells often disappear without treatment. However the precancerous cell may become cancerous. This can happen in less than a year. Moderate to severe dysplasia may be called carcinoma in-situ. Eventually, the abnormal cells grow uncontrollably into the deeper layers of the cervix, becoming an invasive cervical cancer. The screening for cervical cancer is done through Papanicolaou test which has 72% sensitivity & 94% specificity. Though the incidence of cancer cervix have reduced in the urban population but its rate is still alarmingly high in the rural sector. Through the analysis of the results obtained from the study, we wish to reduce the incidences of cervical cancer by educating the rural women about the risk factors and the importance of pap smear screening.

Methods

It is a prospective study conducted at Acharya Vinobha Bhave Rural Hospital for a duration of 2 months. 50 perimenopausal and postmenopausal women coming to the OPD above 40 years were studied excluding those who had intercourse, douching, have used vaginal creams, gels and tampons 24 hours before the test and menstruating females. Women willing to participate were screened after getting their consent through pap smear taken in lithotomy position and were assessed on the basis of a detailed questionnaire which is prepared keeping in mind the etiology of the disease.

Results

Majority of the studied population about 60% showed inflammatory condition. 10% showed precancerous and cancerous lesions namely squamous cell carcinoma, adenocarcinoma, LSIL, ASCUS, hyperkeratosis. 30% showed normal smear.

Conclusion

We found that, foul smelling white discharge with loss of appetite, loss of weight and constant backache were common symptoms. Poor personal hygiene, early age at marriage and first intercourse and multiparity were also observed. Recurrent vaginal infections and immunocompromised states were also contributory.