

Pap Smear Screening and Sources of Information among Ever Married Women in Kota Warisan, Sepang, Selangor, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Cervical cancer is the third most common cancer among women in Malaysia and causes 12.9% of all female cancers in Malaysia. However many studies show that women do not aware that this could be prevented through Pap smear screening. Therefore the purpose of this study was to determine the prevalence of Pap smear screening and sources of information towards Pap smear among ever married women in Kota Warisan, Sepang.

A cross-sectional study was conducted among respondents who were selected through a simple random sampling. Respondents were interviewed using a set of questionnaire and data was analyzed using Statistical Package Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

Prevalence of the Pap smear screening among respondents studied was 57.1% with more than 50% had obtained information from healthcare personnel and media.

Therefore it is important to strengthen the activities on awareness by healthcare providers and media as it contributed to higher prevalence on Pap smear screening among ever married women.

Keyword: pap smear, screening, sources of information, married women

INTRODUCTION

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among women worldwide, with 80% of disease burden occurring within developing countries. [1] It is the third most common cancer among women in Malaysia [2] and causes 12.9% of all female cancers in Malaysia. [3]

However, studies show that only 41% aware that cervical cancer can be

prevented through pap smears, 78.3% do not know any risk factors of cervical cancer and 72% has no knowledge of cervical cancer screening. [4-6] Hyacinth, (2012) [4] also shows that 57.6% of their respondents claim that they have the information on cervical cancer from media, while 22.5% from friends and relative. Whereas, majority (57.7%) of respondents from a study by Al-Naggar (2012) [7] have information on Pap smear from doctors and health premises.

Thus, this study was designed to determine the prevalence of Pap smear screening and sources of information towards Pap smear among ever married women in Kota Warisan, Sepang, Selangor.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional study was conducted in a housing area in Kota Warisan, Sepang, Selangor, which comprises of terrace and Semi-D houses. This area has multi-racial residents and was easily accessible.

Stratified random sampling has been used to classify the houses. Systematic random sampling was then used to pick the houses in each stratum accordingly and simple random sampling using drawing lots to choose the respondents in the house. Only Malaysian women aged 18 years old and above, had been the residents for at least three months were used as samples. Residents with mental disable, deaf and mute were excluded in this survey.

Data were collected through face to face interview session using a validated questionnaire ($\alpha=0.8$). [8] The questionnaire

comprises of two components namely sources of information (4 items) and practice (1 item). A two way closed-ended question was used for practice components, whereas the other components used a 4 Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1).

The data analysed for the components of sources of information, were scored as strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3), strongly agree (4). The data will be further divided into agree and disagree,

in which agree scores between 0-8 and disagree score was 9-16.

RESULT

A total of 132 participants participated in this study, with 119 being ever married women.

Table 1: Prevalence of Pap smear screening among ever married women respondents

Screening status	n	%
Yes	68	57.1
No	51	42.9
Total	119	100.0

Majority (57.1%) of the respondents have had Pap smear screening.

Table 2: Pap smear screening among ever married women, by socio-demographic (N=119)

Socio-demography	Pap smear screening			P value
	Yes n (%)	No n (%)	Total n (%)	
Age				
< 20	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0.261
20 - 29	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)	6 (100.0)	
30 - 39	33 (61.1)	21 (38.9)	54 (100.0)	
40 - 49	21 (58.3)	15 (41.7)	36 (100.0)	
50 - 59	5 (35.7)	9 (64.3)	14 (100.0)	
> 59	4 (44.4)	5 (55.6)	9 (100.0)	
Ethnicity				
Malay	61 (57.5)	45 (42.5)	106 (100.0)	0.372
Chinese	2 (33.3)	4 (66.7)	6 (100.0)	
Indian	5 (71.4)	2 (28.6)	7 (100.0)	
Education				
Primary	2 (50.0)	2 (50.0)	4 (100.0)	0.186
Secondary	13 (43.3)	17 (56.7)	30 (100.0)	
Tertiary	53 (62.4)	32 (37.6)	85 (100.0)	
Occupation				
Unemployed	10 (43.5)	13 (56.5)	23 (100.0)	0.269
Government	32 (66.7)	16 (33.3)	48 (100.0)	
Private	15 (62.5)	9 (37.5)	24 (100.0)	
Pensioner	6 (42.8)	8 (57.2)	14 (100.0)	
Self employed	5 (50.0)	5 (50.0)	10 (100.0)	
Household monthly income (RM)				
< 1,000	10 (35.7)	18 (64.3)	28 (100.0)	0.074
1,001 - 3,000	4 (57.1)	3 (42.9)	7 (100.0)	
3,001 - 5,000	23 (69.7)	10 (30.3)	33 (100.0)	
>5,000	31 (60.8)	20 (39.2)	51 (100.0)	

Table 2 shows majority of the respondents were Malay, at age of 30-39 years old, had tertiary education, working in government office and had monthly income more than RM 5,000

Whereas the higher prevalence of Pap smear screening are among age group of 20-29 (83.3%), Indian (71.4%), respondents with tertiary education (62.4%), government staff (66.7%) and household monthly income of RM 3000 -5000 (69.7%) Table 3 shows majority of respondents agreed that they had information on Pap smear screening from health care personnel.

Table 3: Sources of information on Pap smear among ever married women (N=119)

Sources of information	Agree	Disagree
	n (%)	n (%)
Healthcare personnel	70 (58.8)	49 (41.2)
Media	64 (53.8)	55 (46.2)
Family members	41 (34.5)	78 (65.5)
Friends	39 (32.8)	80 (67.2)

Table 4 shows majority of the respondents who had their Pap smear screening had the information from healthcare personnel (78%). Statistically, there is a significant association between information received from healthcare personnel and Pap smear screening ($p < 0.05$)

Table 4: Association between sources of information and Pap smear screening

Sources of information	Screening		Total n (%)	P-value
	Yes n (%)	No n (%)		
Healthcare personnel	25 (78.0)	7 (22.0)	32 (100.0)	0.003
Friends	11 (39.0)	17 (61.0)	28 (100.0)	0.612
Family members	12 (42.8)	16 (57.2)	28 (100.0)	0.867
Media	20 (64.5)	11 (35.5)	31 (100.0)	0.367

DISCUSSION

Studies done by Damiani [9] and Azlan [10] show that the prevalence of pap smear screening are more than 50% and 52.2% respectively, which are consistent with our finding (57.1%).

Azlan also reports that there is a higher proportion of those who had had a screening among women aged 35 to 39 years old compared to the other age groups. The least likely to have had a Pap smear were women aged below 25 years old. This is probably because most women in this age category are newlyweds. [10] However, our result showed slightly higher prevalence of Pap smear screening among women aged 20-29 years compared to aged 30-39 years old. Other than the numbers of respondents were smaller than later, the higher prevalence might be due to the source of information they use such as media. This was supported by Thorburn, Keon & Kue, where the mass media or electronic are favorable sources of information to find out more about Pap smear screening. [11] Mass media or electronic device are also helpful in Pap smear information, where less than 50% of respondents in a study done by Hyacinth, [4] who had heard about Pap smear test get information through mass media and this was similar with our study.

The percentage of women who had a Pap smear screening within the last 3 years was higher among those with secondary and tertiary education than those who had no education or just primary education, [11] which was consistent with our finding. The utilisation of Pap smear among women with higher level of education is significantly greater [12] with reason on the basis of these women being highly knowledgeable with addition of good socioeconomic status.

Zaridah [3] in her study has concluded that among those who had never underwent Pap smear screening, most had a household income of RM1000 or less (48%), which is consistent with our finding where 64.3% with household monthly income of less than RM 1,000 and 56.5% of unemployed women had never underwent pap smear screening. This might be due to low education level that might earn less income thus, less practice of Pap smear due to the cost. The cost of a Pap smear varies among doctor's offices and it can range from \$50 through \$200. Some offices have a discounted price for uninsured women, while others have a standard rate. [13] While in Malaysia, it normally costs RM20 at government clinics and average of RM80 per procedure at private clinics. [14]

In another study, Peterson reports that women who had ever lived in a rural community, not completed high school, household income of \$15,000 a year, and no health insurance are significantly less likely to have a recent Pap test, and the most common reason specified are cost (25%), followed by reporting a doctor had not recommended the test (22%). [15]

However, our study showed that majority of respondents claimed that they received information on Pap smear screening from healthcare personnel which was consistent with the study by La Torre, [16] where 80% declared satisfaction with the information received from their Gynecologist during the Pap test. Al-Naggar, [7] in his study also report that majority of females would prefer information from healthcare personnel (57.7%), where it reflects that they trust health care personnel.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study showed that information from healthcare personnel and media contribute to the higher prevalence on Pap smear screening. Healthcare personnel and media still play a big role in influencing women to go for Pap smear screening. Therefore, the government, particularly

healthcare and media providers need to acknowledge this issue and work hand in hand in increasing the practice of Pap smear. The utilisation of media electronic could make this effort easier especially giving awareness to the youngsters, who are the majority usage.

In future, more studies on awareness need to be done amongst adolescents which could give more general views and attitudes towards Pap smear screening.

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