Awareness and Acceptability of Self-sampling for Human Papillomavirus Testing among Women in Rural Delta State.

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Background: *Cervical cancer is the second highest cause of cancer deaths among African women. In Nigeria, one woman dies of cervical cancer daily (Ci & Makata, 2016). The most important risk factor for cervical cancer is infection by the human papillomavirus (HPV) (Kashyap, Krishnan, Kaur, & Ghai, 2019). The disease can be prevented due to its long preclinical phase that can be detected by screening. The World Health Organization recommends high-risk HPV DNA testing as the primary cervical screening approach in places where Pap testing has not been established. This study aimed to determine the level of awareness and acceptability of self-sampling for human papillomavirus testing in rural areas of Delta State.*

Methods: *The study is a cross sectional study design. Study population were women between ages 30 and 65years who are resident in the selected communities. Sample size was 230. Sampling method employed was a multi-stage sampling technique. The study instrument was a semi-structured interviewer administered questionnaire. Self-collection kits were given to participants who gave informed consent to provide vaginal samples for HPV testing. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 25.0. Descriptive data was presented in frequency distribution tables.*
Number of women who provided vaginal samples, who prefer to use self-sampling in the future and willing to recommend it to a friend were analyzed to determine level of acceptability of self-sampling.

Results: *The mean age ± SD of respondents was 41.1 ± 8. 4years. Results from this study showed that 43(18.7%), 34(14.8%) and 2(0.9%) of the 230 respondents were aware of cervical cancer, human papillomavirus and self-sampling for HPV respectively.*
17(7.4%) respondents were aware of cervical cancer screening methods but only 6(2.6%) had ever been screened for cervical cancer. Acceptability of self-sampling was 92.6%.

Table 1. Level of Awareness of HPV

Awareness of HPV	Frequency	Percentage
Not Aware	196	85.2
Aware	34	14.8
Total	230	100

Table 2. Level of Awareness of Cervical Cancer

Awareness of Cervical Cancer	Frequency	Percentage
Not Aware	187	81.3
Aware	43	18.7
Total	230	100

Table 3. Level of Awareness of Self-sampling

Awareness of Self - sampling	Frequency	Percentage
Not Aware	228	99.1
Aware	2	0.9
Total	230	100

Discussion: Cervical screening is crucial in early detection and prevention of cervical cancer. Low level of awareness and knowledge of human papillomavirus (HPV), cervical cancer and screening has been implicated as one of the factors of underutilization of cervical screening in Nigeria.

Therefore, efforts to increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of the perceptions of women about cervical cancer and screening through the provision of an educational intervention will be an important step in promoting the health of women.

Conclusion: With the World Health Organization's call to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health problem by 2120, and the draft elimination strategy target of 70% of the world's women being screened with a high-performance HPV test between 35 and 45 years of age by 2030 (Gultekin, Ramirez, Broutet, & Hutubessy, 2020), self-sampling is likely the only feasible way to scale up and realize this target.

Keywords: Cervical Cancer, Human papillomavirus, Self-sampling.

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