

Cervical screening in four remote Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations: a clinical audit on adherence to the National Cervical Screening Program

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Background: The incidence of cervical cancer in Australia is amongst the lowest in the world, at 7.20 per 100 000 women¹. However the incidence is significantly higher amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, at 20.0 per 100,000 women¹. Secondary prevention of cervical cancer in Australia is through the National Cervical Screening Program (NCSP) which underwent a series of significant changes in December 2017².

Aim: To determine what proportion of current female patients at four remote Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCHOs) were being managed in accordance with the updated NCSP.

Methods: A 28 month (1 December 2017 to 1 April 2020) retrospective audit of patient electronic medical records at four ACCHOs in remote Western Australia. Inclusion criteria consisted of current female patients aged 18 years and over, with no prior cervical abnormalities/cancer or hysterectomy. A randomised sample of 50 patients was audited. The primary outcome measure, set in conjunction with stakeholders, was a standard of 60% of patients being managed in accordance with the NCSP.

Results: In total, 60% of patients (n=30) were managed in accordance with the NCSP and 40% (n=20) were not. Of those patients who were not managed in accordance, 50% (n=10) were overdue for their next CST, 35% (n=7) had a CST completed over a year late, and 15% (n=3) had a CST completed despite not being eligible for the NCSP.

Conclusion: The four remote ACCHOs were achieving the desired compliance rate with the NCSP. Non-compliance was predominately due to under-screening, with a small proportion of over-screening of young women who were not yet eligible for the NCSP.

References:

¹ Australia Institute of Health and Welfare. Cervical screening in Australia 2019. Canberra: AIHW; 2019.

² Hammond I, Saville M, Cancer Council Australia Cervical Cancer Screening Guidelines Working Party. Introduction. 2020. In: National Cervical Screening Program: Guidelines for the management of screen-detected abnormalities, screening in specific populations and investigation of abnormal vaginal bleeding. Sydney: Cancer Council Australia. Available from: https://wiki.cancer.org.au/australia/Guidelines:Cervical_cancer/Screening.