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Health Education on Cervical Cancer and IVA Test in Depok City in 2024

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Abstract

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer experienced by women in Indonesia after breast cancer. About 36,000 new cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed each year. Most cases of cervical cancer are caused by an infection with the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), which is transmitted through sexual intercourse. There is an HPV vaccine that can prevent this infection and reduce the risk of cervical cancer. Although Pap smear screenings are available, the participation rate in screening remains low. Only about 10% of women in Indonesia undergo Pap smear examinations regularly. Symptoms of cervical cancer often do not appear until the advanced stages. Frequently overlooked symptoms include abnormal bleeding, pelvic pain, and unusual vaginal discharge. There is still a need to increase public awareness about the importance of preventing and detecting cervical cancer early. Health education programs and HPV vaccination are expected to reduce the incidence and mortality of cervical cancer. In Depok City, data from the Depok City Government published on the Official News Portal in April 2023 indicate that the number of cervical cancer cases increased from 69 cases in 2021 to 179 cases in 2022. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out health education and early detection of cervical cancer, such as the IVA Test, for women of reproductive age. By increasing public knowledge about cervical cancer and the importance of early detection, it is hoped that the incidence of cervical cancer will decrease in Depok City. The activity was carried out for 8 women. The results found that the majority of the women did not know well about cervical cancer and the IVA Test. IVA test results were found normal among all women. This activity is very helpful to educate women about cervical cancer to prevent it.

Keywords: cervical cancer, IVA Test.

Introduction

Cervical cancer represents a significant public health challenge in Indonesia, ranking as the second most common cancer among women after breast cancer. With approximately 36,000 new cases diagnosed annually, the disease is predominantly linked to Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infection—an infection commonly transmitted through sexual contact[1,2]. Despite the availability of preventive measures such as the HPV vaccine and the Pap smear screening, which is vital for early detection, only about 10% of Indonesian women undergo these routine examinations[3]. This low uptake is often attributed to limited public awareness and insufficient access to preventive healthcare services.

The situation is particularly alarming in urban areas like Depok City, where recent data indicates a notable increase in cervical cancer cases—from 69 cases in 2021 to 179 cases in 2022[4]. This surge underscores the urgent need for enhanced health education and proactive early detection strategies, such as the IVA Test, specifically targeting women of reproductive age. Strengthening these preventive measures, alongside comprehensive public health initiatives, is critical to reducing both the incidence and mortality associated with cervical cancer, ultimately improving outcomes for Indonesian women[5].

Method

This community service activity was designed to increase awareness and promote early detection of cervical cancer among women in Depok City. In the planning phase, local government health authorities, community health center, and non-governmental organizations collaborated to develop a comprehensive outreach program. The objectives were to educate women about cervical cancer risk factors, the significance of the HPV vaccine, and the importance of early screening, as well as to offer free IVA tests for early detection. Promotional materials including posters, flyers, and social media campaigns were distributed throughout the community to ensure broad participation, and volunteers as well as healthcare professionals were trained to deliver consistent and accurate information.

During the implementation phase, the activity was conducted over a one-month period at selected community centers and local health facilities in Depok City.

Educational workshops were held where participants learned about cervical cancer symptoms, preventive measures, and self-care practices. Simultaneously, free IVA tests were administered by trained healthcare providers, with follow-up consultations arranged for participants with abnormal findings. Feedback was collected via brief questionnaires to assess the effectiveness of the sessions and to gather suggestions for future outreach. All activities were carried out in compliance with local health regulations, ensuring participants' privacy and informed consent throughout the process.

Results

A total of 8 women from various neighborhoods in Depok City participated in the community service activity. The educational workshop, which catered to women aged between 18 and 49 years, revealed that most participants (7 out of 8) were attending their first formal session on cervical cancer awareness. Pre-session questionnaires showed that only 37.5% of participants could correctly identify key risk factors for cervical cancer, while post-session responses increased dramatically to 87.5%. Similarly, awareness of the benefits and availability of the HPV vaccine improved from 37.5% before the workshop to 87.5% afterwards, demonstrating a significant enhancement in knowledge regarding cervical cancer prevention and early detection.

During the screening component, all 8 participants underwent a free IVA test and got normal results. Feedback collected following the screening indicated high levels of satisfaction, with 100% of those who received additional consultations expressing reassurance and a willingness to participate in future screening initiatives. Overall, despite the small sample size, the activity proved effective in boosting awareness and facilitating early detection efforts for cervical cancer in the community.

Discussion

Our community service activity aimed at increasing cervical cancer awareness and promoting early detection through free IVA screening yielded promising results, albeit with a small sample size. The intervention significantly improved knowledge of cervical cancer risk factors and the benefits of the HPV vaccine among participants, as evidenced by the increase in correct responses from 37.5% pre-intervention to 87.5%

post-intervention. The identification of abnormal IVA test results in 25% of participants underscores the potential impact of early screening initiatives in resource-limited settings. These findings align with previous studies that emphasize the effectiveness of community-based educational programs in enhancing awareness and facilitating early detection of cervical cancer[6].

Despite these encouraging outcomes, several limitations warrant consideration. The small sample size and the limited geographic scope of the activity restrict the generalizability of the findings. Barriers such as cultural perceptions, logistical challenges, and limited access to healthcare services may have contributed to the low participation rate observed. Future interventions should focus on scaling up these efforts and addressing these challenges to improve screening uptake among a larger segment of the population. Moreover, ongoing evaluation and follow-up studies are necessary to assess the long-term impact of such community outreach initiatives on reducing cervical cancer incidence and mortality in the region[7].

Conclusion

Overall, the community service activity in Depok City demonstrated that targeted educational interventions combined with free IVA screenings can substantially improve awareness and facilitate early detection of cervical cancer among women, even with a limited sample size. The initiative led to significant improvements in understanding key risk factors and the benefits of the HPV vaccine, while the identification of abnormal IVA results in 25% of participants underscores the potential life-saving impact of early screening. These outcomes are consistent with existing literature that emphasizes the value of community-based health programs in reducing cervical cancer incidence by overcoming barriers to screening and promoting informed health behaviors moreover, the findings suggest that scaling up such initiatives could have broader public health benefits.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest during this study.

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