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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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KNOWLEDGE AND BARRIERS OF CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING AMONG WOMEN IN SELECTED PUBLIC HEALTH MIDWIFE AREAS IN BATTICALOA

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Background: Cancer of the cervix is the second most common gynaecological malignancy in Sri Lanka and the fourth most frequent cancer in women worldwide. Cervical cancer is highly preventable and curable with early diagnosis and treatment in its precancerous stage.

Objective: To assess the knowledge on cervical cancer and its screening and to identify the barriers for screening among women in selected Public Health Midwives (PHM) areas in Batticaloa.

Method: A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted in 380 women aged between 20 and 60 years in the selected PHM areas (Kokkuvil, Puliyantheevu and Irudhayapuram East) in Batticaloa Medical Officer of Health (MOH) area. Sample was selected through simple random sampling and an interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 19 was used to analyze the data and Chi squared test was used to analyze the association of knowledge with the demographical factors.

Result: Only 14% of participants had adequate knowledge on risk factors, signs and symptoms, preventive and treatment measures of cervical cancer, and 3.1% of participants had adequate knowledge on cervical cancer screening. The overall knowledge on cervical cancer was inadequate (56.1%). The overall knowledge score was strongly associated with age, residence, educational status, occupation, economic status. A significant number of women (87.1%) had never undergone any cervical cancer screening test. This was attributed by lack of knowledge on cervical cancer and its screening measures and unequally distributed health care facilities.

Conclusion: The overall knowledge on cervical cancer and its screening methods were poor among the women in this study. There is an imperative need for awareness programmes to promote cervical cancer screening tests to enhance the well-being of the women.

Keywords: Cervical cancer, Knowledge, Screening