

Research Article**Frequency of performing PAP smears its motives and obstacles in women referring to gynecology clinic of Yasuj city.****Mahmoodi Fatemeh¹, Aramesh Shahin Taj²,****Mousavizadeh Ali³ and Ghafari Parvin^{4*}**

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²Associate Professor of Infertility, Faculty member of University of Medical Sciences, Yasuj, Iran³PHD in Epidemiology , Faculty member of University of Medical Sciences, Yasuj, Iran^{4*} Associate Professor of Oncology, Faculty member of University of Medical Sciences, Yasuj, Iran**ABSTRACT**

Introduction: cervix cancer is ranked as prevalent cancer among women after the skin breast and lung cancers, which could be curbed in the early stages by cheap, easy and accessible screening. The present research was carried out with the objective of determining the frequency of pap smear cases, motives and obstacles in the women referring to gynecology clinic.

Method : this is a sectional – descriptive research. The community of the research were 225 women referring to gynecology clinic of yasuj city. Thorough census was carried out. The data collecting tools were questionnaires, spss19 soft ware and descriptive tests were used for data analysis.

Findings: the average age of women were 18-40±11.6 years, 54.2% of them had basic level of literary (junior high school, elementary school), 97.5% were married, and 95.15% were housewives. There were background of regular pap smear in 21.7% and only 9% of the clients had reported a hiltery in their first degree relatives. The most prevalent motives of referring were recommendations of medical and health care providers, physician's diagnosis experiencing gyno-obstertric infections.

The reasons behind screening were unawareness of the existence of such examinations, unaware of the existence of training centers for examinations, and some of them do not have the history of there kind of problems.

Also there was a significant statistical correlation between age, level of education, employment status of women and place of residence. With doing pap smear. ($p < 0.05$, $p = 0.001$).

Conclusion: low rate of clients for regular pap smear was much lower than the expected level. our proposals are wide spread trainings by the medical and health personnel and through radio and television, introducing screening centers for cervix cancer which are of vital importance.

Keywords: pap smear, women, prevalence

INTRODUCTION

Cervix cancer is a major health problem in the developing countries and while it is a preventable disease in women 85% of morality cases of cervix cancer have been reported from the developing countries. this cancer is responsible for the death of 2.4 million women in the age range of 25-65 years in these

countries (1,2) annually 500 thousand new cases of the disease are observed in the world. If the disease is discovered in the early stages without symptoms, it is always treatable by surgery or radiotherapy in mast cases. there fore, the key in controlling the malignancy of cervix is pap smear(3). Pop smear is the most widespread and

most effective screening test which is known to this time . wide spread use of pap smear test or cytology test of cervix have caused 70% reduction of mortality because of cervix cancer in the developed countries during the past fifty years (4) so the disease shows a 50% in the countries of Finland ,Sweden ,Denmark and Iceland (5). While , in the developing countries , the reduction of mortality from cervix does not follow the same pattern due to lack of awareness regarding the method of patient ,screening , finding , and impossible of wide spread performance of the test at the community level(6,7). Now , cervix cancer occupies the 6th rank among mortal cancer. Death arisen from cervix cancer now ranks 6th (8).

In Iran , based on the policies of the world health organization (WHO) , pap smear is done every three years for all women who have been reported their Pap smear tests are negative in a one years period all women in the age range of 20-65 years who at least got married once(9). The studies carried out in this field show that the women in many communities do not know that cervix cancer is preventable, and in many countries. They refer to physicians when they feel sick, and sometimes, they do not refer for due to feeling of shame , fear , and lack of trust in the medical staff (4). Also a study in 2010 has mentioned obstacles such as unawareness of the existence of Pap smear , lack of recommendation by physicians stress, shame , pain and high cost as the factors that contribute to women refusal to do the test (10).

Other studies have shown in their research that pain and unawareness of the place of referral, social and cultural impediments among women have been introduced as an obstacle for women to apply for Pap smear test(11,7). With respect to the fact that there is no exact statistics on the rate of cervix cancer diagnostic tests, but the evidences reveal that in spite of the positive effects of patient finding (screening)the rate of the test is very low in the community , so that in a research by enjzab etal (2004)only 14.5 % of women had regularly undergone pap smear (9) . Also in a study by Kim (2004) an the Korean women less than a half of the studied women had undergone pap smear test once in their life time(12) . since in any society the hygienic and

preventive ideas and behavior are constructed based on the social and cultural contexts of the members of that society for the same reason the present research was carried out with the objective of determining the frequency of doing Pap smear test , motives and impediments in the women referring to gynecology clinic.

METHOD AND MATERIAL

The present research is a section-descriptive study. the research community were Iranian married women referring to gynecology clinic of yasuj city. The number of samples were calculated to be 225 ,considering the confidence limit of 95%,and 4% accuracy of sample size the inclusion criteria were married women who had spent at least six months in marriage and entered the research with informed consent. The exclusion criteria were unwillingness to participate in the research. The sampling method was in the form of objective –based full census, and by one referral to the research samples, the needed data were collected through questionnaire and interview. The data collecting tools were questionnaires including two parts. The first part was pertaining to the individual specifications, and two questions about the background of under going gynecology.

Examination and background of malignancy in the family of the research units. the second part included the options pertaining to reasons for refusal to refer and motives of referral to undergo pap smear test. the content credibility method, and opinions of a number of the university of questionnaires ,and reexamination method was used for confidence. **SPSS** software version 19 was used for data analysis ,and for approaching the research objectives ,and descriptive statistics, relative and absolute frequency tables were used .Also for investigating the difference of averages ,T .test was used for quantitative data ,and K square for qualitative data.

FINDING :

Based on the finding of the research the average age of the women under study were 18-40±11.6 . 97.5% of individuals were married and the rest were divorcees or widows. 92.15%were house wives ,and literary level of 54.2%was limited to

elementary and junior high school . Eleven (11)cases (5%) in the research had a background of malignancy ,while 7% of them had reported background of gynecology malignancy in their first and second relatives. The results of the present research showed that only 21.7% of women (49persons)have mentioned the background of regular pap smear. The most prevalent motives of applying for pap smear included recommendations of health and medical staff , diagnoses of physicians, and having problems and gynecology infections(table1).

The findings of the research showed that the most prevalent barriers in the way of undergoing

pap smear are unawareness of the existence of such examinations. Unawareness on the existence of centers for examinations, not having background of gynecology problems, shame to be examined ,fear of the diagnosis of the disease.(test result),fear of having pain during examination (table 2). The findings showed that there is a significant statistical correlation between ago. level of education ,and employment status of women and applying for pap smear ($p<0.05,p=0.001 , p=0.001$).

Also there was a significant correlation bet wean place of residence , and applying for pap smear .so that 82.3% of women living in rural areas had not undergone pap smear ($p<0.05$).

Table 1 Frequency distribution of motives to apply for pap smear test

motives	Pap smear	
	NO	P.C
Recommended by health and medical personal	153	68.1
Awareness through media	9	4.02
Awareness through personal study	12	5.3
Diagnosis of physicians	57	25.3
Background of cancer in relatives	5	2.2
Having gyne-problem and infections	43	19.11
Because of using contraceptives	21	9.3
Other reasons	28	12.44

Table 2 Frequency distribution of barriers of applying for pap smear test

Barriers (obstacles)	Pap smear	
	Number	percent
Unawareness of such exams	143	63.55
Unawareness of the centers for examination	51	22.6
Unawareness of free exams	11	4.8
Thinking of high costs	22	9.7
Unawareness of preventable cancer	19	8.4
No history of problem	90	40.02
Feeling ashamed to be examined	43	19.11
Fear of pain during examination	29	12.8
Fear of diagnosis of disease (test result)	32	14.2
Lack of training by health personal	11	14.8
Forget fullness or negligence	13	5.7
Lack of belief on exams to prevent cancer	13	5.7
Not having sufficient time (high business)	23	10.02

DISCUSSION

The present study showed that only 21.7% of participants in the research had regularly undergone pap smear ,and in other case ,the screening for cervix cancer has been undesirable , the results of which are in consistency with other studies carried out in the years ,2000,2001 ,and 2009 (3-13-14).because of wide spread use of pap smear in most industrial countries, the

mortality rate caused by cervix cancer has significantly reduced (15).Watkins etal (2003) have mentioned that 20 to 30 percent of deaths caused by cervix cancer could be prevented by screening (16).but in iran cervix cancer is diagnosed and treated merely based on the symptoms and pap smear test result (17-18). In other studies 85 % of women had undergone pap smear in Mexico , 69%in Latin America ,and

49.5% in Argentine (15-8-20). but in the present research in spite of pap smear screening plan in all health and medical centers .only regularly undergone pap smear test. The reasons of research subjects to apply for pap smear test have been recommendations of health teams , having gynecology problem, diagnosis of physicians .shame to be examined ,fear of diagnosis of the disease, (test results)fear of having pain during examination respectively .in this research ,recommendations of health cadre have been the most part of motives for individual to apply for pap smear ,witch is consist with the results of similar research (3,21)and this indicates the influence of training and emphasis of medical personal to develop healthy behavior in the families .for the same reason it is the task of health personal to give training and extend the screening methods of cancer at proper opportunities that women refer to gynecology clinics and medical centers ,and inform relief –seeking women on the risk factors of cancer ,and benefits of early diagnostic methods (7).Also having women with problems, or having friends ,relatives or neighbors who have died because of cancer ,and recommending their family members and also among other factors that motivate individuals to apply for screening of cervix cancer in over society and other societies (3,21,22)

In relation to determining reasons and barriers of studied cases to apply for pap smear, unawareness of the existence of such exams,(63.55%) not having a background of problem (40%). And such examinations(22.6%) are items to be mentioned respectively. With respect to the reasons of individuals for refusal, it is observed that the most important reasons indicate unwariness and no acquaintance with screening method ,risk factors of cancer ,and benefits of early diagnosis of cervix cancer .refusal to express problem as a barrier for applying ,indicates that women of the mentioned community have no acquaintance with the prevention services which are provided by health and medical clinics ,and these centers are merely places for treatment of disease ,after the outbreak of symptoms(3).feeling ashamed of being examined (19.11%)fear of pain during examination (12.8%) fear of diagnosis of disease

(14.4%) rank next in reasons for no applying .which have been mentioned in other studies as cultural factors ,and in some studies the reasons have been considered as major barriers of individuals to apply (3,13,23)but imagination of high costs, unawareness of free examinations, unawareness of the existence of centers for the examinations ,or lack of access to the centers have been other effective factors which are considered as organizational barriers ,and are controllable of residence and job had significant correlation with doing pap smear the results of a research by Mohammad and Alsairafi (2009) showed that young women are more confident of their health ,and rarely go after physicians or medical services . more over ,behavior of physicians or patients in response to disease are different in terms of age , and cause less attention of physicians to lower ages on the probability of disease , unless individuals show symptoms, and the fact that the test is done less young women is because of lower likelihood of cervix cancer in them(24). Meanwhile, the results of a research by hadi (2009) are in consistent with the results of the present research and show that by increase of education, and social ranking women acquire more awareness regarding health and disease (25).

CONCLUSION :

with respect to the obtained of this research ,the following proposals are presented in line with for there results and removing obstacles in the way of individuals referring to for screening of pap smear test . With respect to the fact that the majority of clients medical centers ,and gynecology clinics are women ,the training plans should be prepared in the form of film and slide that fit the potentials of this group . with respect to the fact that a large number of participants in the research had mentioned their unwariness regarding the existence of such centers,there for suitable propaganda should be designed in the society to introduce locations of performing the test .and their activities .with respect to the fact that the majority of cases are house wives timing should be planned with higher flexibility. Another proposed is determining one month of the year by radio-

television ,and media as the month of pap smear or clinical examinations of women during which women could refer to gyne-clinics and medical centers for screening .

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