

Counselling to Screening: Honing an Institutional Cervical Cancer Screening Program

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Abstract:

Objective: Cervical cancer screening is an important tool in WHO's global strategy for cervical cancer elimination. The objective of the study was to suggest and study the impact of capacity building interventions to increase cervical cancer screening rates in women aged 30-49 years attending the gynecological OPD.

Methods: As part of a multicentric study, qualitative research was carried out at a tertiary care institute (from September 2021 to June 2022) to gather information regarding the existing cervical cancer screening practices, analyze factors preventing universal screening, and develop troubleshooting strategies. A fishbone analysis was done to identify barriers to cervical cancer screening. Stepwise sequential implementation of seven Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles which included; doctors training, policy formation, dedicated counsellor and reminders on social network groups, OPD card stamps, reading and educational material, screening in all OPD rooms and finally establishment of dedicated screening room. The effect of each on counselling and screening of eligible women was noted.

Results: With the implementation of these PDSA cycles, the rates of eligible women being screened increased from 10.6% at baseline to 44.8% at the end of the study period. The percentage of counselled women increased to 70% and it was observed that counselled women were more likely to get screened.

Conclusion: Educating women about the importance of cervical cancer screening and the creation of a dedicated screening room were the two most important quality improvement interventions.