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knowledge and uptake of cervical cancer screening is low among women living with HIV/AIDS in Northwest Ethiopia

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In Ethiopia, cervical cancer is ranked as the second most common type of cancer in women and it is about eight times more common in HIV infected women. However, data on knowledge of HIV infected women regarding cervical cancer and acceptability of screening is scarce in Ethiopia. Hence, the present study is aimed at assessing the level of knowledge about cervical cancer and uptake of screening among HIV infected women in Gondar, Northwest Ethiopia. A cross-sectional, questionnaire based survey was conducted on 302 HIV infected women attending the outpatient clinic at the University of Gondar Referral and Teaching Hospital from March 1st to 30th, 2017. Descriptive statistics, univariate and multivariate logistic regression analysis were also performed to examine factors associated with uptake of cervical cancer screening service. Overall, only 64 (21.2%) respondents were knowledgeable about cervical cancer and screening and only 71 (23.5%) respondents were ever screened in their lifetime. In women aged between 21–29 years old (AOR=2.78, 95% CI=1.71–7.29), perceived susceptibility to develop cervical cancer (AOR=2.85, 95% CI=1.89–6.16) and comprehensive knowledge of cervical cancer (AOR=3.02, 95% CI=2.31–7.15) were found to be strong predictors of cervical cancer screening service uptake. The knowledge and uptake of cervical cancer screening among HIV infected women was found to be very poor. Taking into consideration the heightened importance of comprehensive knowledge in participating in cervical cancer screening services, different stakeholders working on cancer and HIV/AIDS should provide a customized health promotion intervention and awareness creation to HIV-infected women, along with improving accessibility of cervical cancer screening services in rural areas.