

2nd Gynecologic Cancer Conference

October 17-18, 2016 Rome, Italy

The uptake of cervical cancer screening services by nurses of Thika Level 5 Hospital, Kiambu County in Kenya

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Cervical cancer is the second commonest type of cancer among women globally and about 85% of cervical cancer deaths occur in the sub-Saharan. Screening women for cervical cancer is the only most feasible strategy for its prevention however, the rate of cervical cancer screening in Kenya stands at 3.2% which is one of the lowest in the region. Nurses form the bulk of health professionals directly involved in cervical cancer screening and advocacy, however, studies have shown that despite nurses' good knowledge on cervical cancer and their involvement in its prevention activities, themselves do not uptake the screening services. The aim of the study was to investigate the uptake of cervical cancer screening services by female nurses working in Thika Level Five Hospital. The choice of Thika Level 5 Hospital for the study was due to its relatively large bed capacity and staff establishment. Ethical clearance was obtained from The Mount Kenya University Ethics Review Committee and from Research and Ethics Committee of Thika Level 5 Hospital. Descriptive cross sectional study design was adopted and the study targeted all female nurses working in Thika Level 5 Hospital. A systematic sampling technique was used where every 2nd nurse was selected from the sampling frame; data was collected using semi structured questionnaire. The obtained information was summarized and analyzed using SPSS data base version 22 for windows. Analyses of variance were used to find out the significant statistical differences between variables and correlations were used to show strength of relationship between variables. The study recorded a response rate of 97%, and the findings indicate generally poor knowledge on cervical cancer as less than 40% of the respondents knew the recommended first line cervical cancer screening method used in Kenya, only 32% were aware of the age at which HPV vaccine should be administered, and more than 90% of the respondents didn't know of the cervical cancer screening schedule following a negative test results. On the uptake of cervical cancer screening services, the findings indicate screening rate of below average (Out of 163 respondents only 41% had ever been screened) and 53% of the unscreened respondents didn't feel susceptible to cervical cancer. Barriers of cervical cancer screening were significant. The study concludes that: there is serious knowledge deficit on cervical cancer among nurses, the uptake of screening services is also far below expectation- nurses who are usually responsible for mobilizing and screening women for cervical cancer are not getting screened themselves. The study recommends promotion of knowledge on cervical cancer among female nurses; the identified barriers that affect uptake of cervical cancer screening services also need to be addressed in order to scale up cervical cancer screening rate among nurses.

Biography

Ngutiku Joseph Murith holds a Master of Science in Nursing (MScN-Midwifery) from Mount Kenya University. He is a full time Lecturer and Sectional Head of General Nursing at Mathare Medical Training College, Nairobi, Kenya.

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