

Carcinoma Cervix: A Global Health Concern and the Importance of Early Detection

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DESCRIPTION

Carcinoma cervix, also known as cervical cancer, is a prevalent malignancy that affects the cervix, the lower part of the uterus connecting to the vagina. It is the fourth most common cancer in women globally and a leading cause of cancer-related deaths among women in low- and middle-income countries. This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of carcinoma cervix, including its causes, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention strategies.

Causes of carcinoma cervix

The primary cause of carcinoma cervix is persistent infection with high-risk Human Papillomavirus (HPV) types, mainly HPV-16 and HPV-18. HPV is a sexually transmitted infection, and factors such as early onset of sexual activity, multiple sexual partners, and smoking increase the risk of acquiring the infection. Other risk factors include a weakened immune system, long-term use of oral contraceptives, and a family history of cervical cancer. Understanding these risk factors is essential for preventive measures and early detection.

Diagnosis of carcinoma cervix

Early detection plays a crucial role in improving the prognosis of carcinoma cervix. Screening methods such as the Papanicolaou (Pap) test and HPV testing are commonly used for cervical cancer screening. The Pap test involves collecting cells from the cervix and examining them for abnormalities. HPV testing detects the presence of high-risk HPV strains in cervical cells. A positive HPV test may indicate the need for further evaluation through colposcopy, a procedure that allows the visualization and biopsy of abnormal cervical tissue. Biopsy suspicious areas are identified during a colposcopy, a biopsy is performed to obtain a small tissue sample for laboratory analysis. This confirms the presence of cancerous cells and determines the cancer's stage and grade. If abnormalities are detected in the Pap or HPV test, a colposcopy may be recommended. It involves using a special magnifying instrument (colposcope) to examine the cervix more closely. HPV

test checks for the presence of high-risk strains of HPV in the cervix. It is often performed in conjunction with a Pap test for more accurate results.

Treatment of carcinoma cervix

The choice of treatment for carcinoma cervix depends on the stage of the disease, the woman's overall health. Treatment options include surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy. In the early stages, when the cancer is confined to the cervix, surgery such as a cone biopsy or a radical hysterectomy may be recommended. Radiation therapy, which uses high-energy X-rays to kill cancer cells, can be delivered externally or internally (brachytherapy). Chemotherapy, often used in combination with radiation therapy, helps destroy cancer cells throughout the body.

Prevention of carcinoma cervix

Preventive strategies for carcinoma cervix mainly revolve around HPV vaccination and regular screening. HPV vaccines, such as the quadrivalent and nonavalent vaccines, protect against the most common high-risk HPV strains. Vaccination is most effective when administered before sexual debut, usually between the ages of 9 and 14. Additionally, practicing safe sex, limiting the number of sexual partners, and avoiding smoking can reduce the risk of developing cervical cancer. Routine screening for cervical abnormalities through the Pap test or HPV testing is crucial for early detection and timely intervention.

Carcinoma cervix remains a significant global health concern, but with increased awareness, prevention, and early detection, the burden of this disease can be significantly reduced. Understanding the causes, risk factors, and screening methods for cervical cancer is essential for women's health. Vaccination against high-risk HPV strains, regular cervical cancer screenings, and adopting a healthy lifestyle can contribute to the prevention and early detection of carcinoma cervix. By promoting comprehensive healthcare policies, raising awareness, and providing accessible screening and treatment options, helps in minimizing the impact of carcinoma cervix on women's lives worldwide.

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