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## Letter to the Editor

### Cervical cancer screening

Sir,

A cervical cancer is one of the most common cancers among the women in many developing countries. It is estimated that around 83% of all the new cases of cervical cancer and 85% of all the deaths occur in the developing countries. Cervical cancer is the commonest malignancy among women in India.<sup>1</sup> The cervical cancer contributes around 12% of all types of cancers among the women.<sup>2</sup>

The increased risk of late reporting is usually found among women who have lower education.<sup>3</sup> Cancer cervix is difficult to cure once symptoms develop and is fatal if left untreated. Prognosis is strongly dependent upon the stage of disease at detection and treatment.<sup>4</sup>

Cases and deaths have declined markedly in the last 40 years in most industrialized countries, partly owing to a reduction in risk factors, but mainly as a result of extensive screening programmes. More limited improvements have been observed in developing countries, where persistently high rates tend to be the rule.<sup>4</sup> Studies have documented lack of awareness and screening for cervical carcinoma in India.<sup>5</sup>

There is no organized screening and awareness program for any of the common cancers in the country. Most cancer centers provide only opportunistic screening services.<sup>6</sup>

For the prevention by early diagnosis of cervical cancer, only one proven strategy currently available is cytological screening (Pap smear). Many studies have shown that carcinoma in situ can be detected for several years before it progresses to invasive cancer by cytological screening.<sup>7</sup> Papanicolaou smears and treatment of pre-cancerous lesions can lead to 90% reduction of incidence of invasive cervical cancer.<sup>8</sup>

A cancer detection camp was organized at Navodaya medical college, Raichur in April 2010. Total number of women reported for this camp were 46, in the age group 25 to 62 years. Out of which, 22 females had complaints regarding reproductive tract morbidity. All of them were examined clinically. History and clinical findings were recorded. Pap smears of all the symptomatic patients were collected. Table 1 shows the cytological diagnosis of cases.

**Table 1: Pap smear report of cases.**

Number of women	Pap diagnosis	Comments on diagnosis
15	Inflammatory lesions	Negative for malignancy
05	LSIL (Low grade squamous intra-epithelial lesion)	Suspicious of malignancy
01	HSIL (High grade squamous intra-epithelial lesion)	Suspicious of malignancy
01	Squamous cell carcinoma	Positive for malignancy

Among all, inflammatory lesions were found in 15 women. Suspicious of malignancy were found in 6 women and 1 woman was positive for malignancy. Screening for cervical cancer is the most accepted and successful strategy for cervical cancer control, the world over. It is a proven strategy in terms of its effectiveness in reducing the incidence and mortality of cervical cancer. In conclusion, there need of increasing awareness about cancer cervix among women and about screening at regular intervals as screening may result in detection of carcinoma cervix at early stage.

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