

## **A Study on Assessing the Awareness of the Risk Factors Causing Cervical Cancer among Women in Gampaha District, Sri Lanka 2020**

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Cervical cancer is a malignant tumour that arises in the uterine cervix, which has been identified as the second leading cause of cancer deaths among women around the world including Sri-Lanka. A sexually contagious pathogen, the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), is often accountable as the aetiology. Having multiple sexual encounters, engagement in risky sexual behaviour, including the usage of oral contraceptives and possessing a compromised immune system, are considered risk factors. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to evaluate and ascertain the current level of awareness towards cervical cancer risk factors among the women in Gampaha district Sri-Lanka. Method includes a descriptive, cross-sectional study that was conducted on 150 women aged between 18 -50 years. Convenience sampling method was used. Data was collected using a closed-ended, self-administered online questionnaire. Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 25 was used as the analysis tools in the study. The study results put forth that out of the total, 84% of the participants were aware of cervical cancer while 16% were not. A minority (5.4%) believed that there is no method for early detection of cervical cancer. Most of the study participants (56%) were aware of the risk factors of cervical cancer. Among the 56% of the study subjects, 76% of the women identified unsafe sexual practices as one of the major risk factors. Some respondents further believed that avoiding the practice of smoking (2.7%) and unsafe sexual practices (10.7%), obtaining the HPV vaccination (32.7%) and conducting Pap smear test regularly (19.3%) could greatly reduce the chance of the developing cervical cancer and increases the chance of early detection and treatment. In Conclusion, even though the majority of the women were aware of the cervical cancer and their associated risk factors, further research studies and awareness programs should be conducted in the community to provide further information on the risk factors, disease prognosis and severity, enabling women to take the necessary precautions in the future.

**Keywords:** Awareness; Cervical cancer; Risk factors; Sri Lanka; Women.