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### A comparative study to assess the knowledge regarding prevention of cervical cancer among women of reproductive age in selected rural and urban areas of Maharashtra state

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#### Abstract

Cervical cancer is second most common cancer in the world and leading cause of death from cancer among women in developing countries. The objectives of the study were to compare knowledge regarding cervical cancer among women of reproductive age in selected rural and urban areas of Maharashtra state. A comparative study was conducted using descriptive, cross sectional survey among conveniently sampled 120 women; 60 from rural and 60 from urban areas. A structured interview schedule with 25 questions validated by experts were used for data collection. The study results revealed that majority of subjects had poor knowledge (68.3% rural and 55% urban). So there is a need to raise public awareness regarding prevention of cervical cancer.

**Keywords:** Knowledge, cervical cancer, women of reproductive age

#### Introduction

Cervical cancer develops within a woman's cervix. Generally, all cervical cancer cases (99%) happen to be connected to infection with human papillomaviruses (HPV). Cervical cancer is exceedingly common disease transmitted through sexual contact. Although just about all infections with HPV resolve spontaneously and cause no symptoms, persistent infection can easily cause Cancer of Cervix in women [1].

The "cervix," or lowermost portion of a woman's uterus, is affected by cervical cancer. The fourth most prevalent cancer in women worldwide is cervical cancer. Despite being a cancer that can be easily prevented, 604127 women reported having cervical cancer in 2020, and 341831 women died worldwide [2].

The majority of cervical cancer cases are reported from Asian countries (58.2%) and the least from the Northern America region (2.5%). Recent data (2018) show that every year 569847 new cervical cancer cases are diagnosed worldwide. Further, around 2785 million women are at risk of cervical cancer. Worldwide, the age- standardized incidence and mortality rates are found to be 13. 1 and 6. 9 per 100000 women [3].

Since HPV typically has no symptoms, it is impossible to detect it. Most women will recover from HPV on their own, but if not, there is a chance that it could develop cervical cancer in the future. Having HIV or another condition that makes it difficult for your body to combat health issues can also raise your risk of developing cervical cancer. Cervical cancer may not manifest symptoms at an early stage. Advanced cervical cancer may result in vaginal bleeding or

discharge that is abnormal, such as post-sex bleeding. Consult your doctor if you exhibit any of these symptoms [4].

The stage of cervical cancer that is diagnosed also affects survival rates. The 5-year survival rate for those with invasive cervical cancer is 92% when it is diagnosed at an early stage. Early diagnosis of cervical cancer affects about 44% of patients. The 5-year survival rate is 58% if cervical cancer has spread to nearby tissues, organs, and/ or regional lymph nodes. The 5-year survival rate is 18% if the cancer has spread to a distant area of the body [5].

The majority of women are not willing for early detection, and they only seek treatment in the advanced stage. Therefore, women's knowledge about cancer cervix must be improved [6].

#### Materials and Methods

A comparative study was conducted using descriptive, cross sectional survey among conveniently sampled 120 women; 60 from rural and 60 from urban areas. A structured interview schedule with 25 questions validated by experts were used for data collection. Reliability coefficient of the tool was calculated using Karl Pearson correlation coefficient method. The items were coded and the reliability was calculated. Formal permission was obtained from authority concerned. Before completing the structured interview schedule, respondents were obliged to declare their consent for participation in the study.

#### Results

Analysis and interpretation is based on the objectives of the

study. The analysis was done with the help of descriptive statistics.

**Section I. Distribution of socio-demographic variables of women**

**Table 1:** Frequency and percentage distribution of socio-demographic variables and Work-Related Characteristics of women N=120

Demographic Variables	Rural		Urban	
	No. of Women	Percentage (%)	No. of Women	Percentage (%)
<b>Age (yrs)</b>				
16-22 years	20	33.3%	16	26.7%
23-30years	15	25%	18	30%
Above 30 years	25	41.7%	26	43.3%
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Married	38	63.3%	34	56.7%
Unmarried	22	36.7%	26	43.3%
<b>Religion</b>				
Hindu	25	41.7%	22	36.7%
Muslim	10	16.7%	8	13.3%
Buddha	10	16.7%	15	25%
Others	15	25%	15	25%
<b>Family Income per month (in Rupees)</b>				
Below 10000	20	33.3%	18	30%
10001-15000	12	20%	15	25%
15001-20000	15	25%	15	25%
Above 20000	13	21.7%	12	20%

**Section II. Assessment of knowledge regarding prevention of cervical cancer among women of reproductive age**

**Table 2:** Percentage distribution of women of reproductive age with respect to their knowledge regarding prevention of Cervical Cancer N=120

Level of knowledge	Rural		Urban	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	41	68.3%	33	55%
Average	10	16.7%	16	26.7%
Good	9	15%	11	18.3%
Very good	0	0%	0	0%
Excellent	0	0%	0	0%
Overall	60	100%	60	100%

Percentage distribution of mothers according to their level of knowledge shows that out of 60 mothers, majority of them [41 (68.3%) in rural and 33(55%) in urban) had poor knowledge. Similarly, 10(16.7%) of mothers from rural area & 16 (26.7%) of mothers from urban area had average knowledge. However, 9(15%) of mothers from rural area and 11(18.3%) of mothers from rural area had good knowledge. It is also found that none of the mothers from rural and urban area had very good and excellent knowledge.

**Section III. Comparison of knowledge regarding prevention of cervical cancer among women of reproductive age between urban and rural area**

**Table 3:** Comparison of knowledge regarding prevention of cervical cancer among women of reproductive age

Aspects	Maximum Score	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Percentage
Urban	18	11	3.1	44%
Rural	17	13	2.7	52%

The table 3 shows the overall knowledge score of rural and urban women regarding prevention of cervical cancer. It indicates that the mean knowledge score of urban women was 11(44%) and of rural women was 52%. When compared with rural women’s knowledge score the urban women’s knowledge score was found slightly higher. Thus it shows urban women have comparatively more knowledge than rural women.

**Discussion**

The study was conducted to assess knowledge regarding prevention of cervical cancer among women of reproductive age residing in urban and rural area of Maharashtra state, and the results of the study revealed that that out of 60 mothers, majority of them [41 (68.3%) in rural and 33(55%) in urban) had poor knowledge. Similarly, 10(16.7%) of mothers from rural area & 16 (26.7%) of mothers from urban area had average knowledge. However, 9(15%) of mothers from rural area and 11(18.3%) of mothers from rural area had good knowledge. It is also found that none of the mothers from rural and urban area had very good and excellent knowledge. Further, the mean knowledge score of urban women was 11(44%) and of rural women was 52%. When compared with rural women’s knowledge score the urban women’s knowledge score was found slightly higher. Thus it shows urban women have comparatively more knowledge than rural women.

This finding are more or less similar with a study results of a study conducted by Ms. S. Shakila (2015) where majority of women of reproductive age had poor knowledge.

The use of a similar study population (women, study unit, and study design) may account for this similarity, despite the differences in socioeconomic status.

**Conclusion**

The results of the current study showed that women of reproductive age residing in urban and rural area had poor knowledge regarding prevention of cervical cancer. Lack of information sources may have the caused it.

**Conflict of Interest**

Not available

**Financial Support**

Not available

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