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Influence of Interpersonal Communication Channels on the Uptake of Cervical Cancer Screening in Uasin Gishu County

Use of appropriate communication methods has the potential of influencing people's understanding of their susceptibility to a health problem and their receptivity to and uptake of interventions against the problem. Interpersonal communication has been identified as an effective tool for educating people about cancer risks and motivating them to seek screening services for early detection of the disease. This paper examined how interpersonal communication channels utilized in the cervical cancer campaigns influence the uptake of cervical cancer screening among women seeking healthcare services at Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH) in Eldoret. The study used cross-sectional research design and mixed-methods approach in data collection. Data were obtained from MCH/FP clinic at the MTRH. A sample size of 308 women was drawn from the population using systematic sampling over a period of one month. Quantitative primary data were obtained from researcher administered-semi structured questionnaires. Qualitative data were gathered using four focused group discussions and 15 key informant interviews. Preliminary findings of this ongoing study reveal that the government is disseminating cervical cancer information using the mass media channels. Few interpersonal communication channels have been employed in the campaign, a possible cause of low uptake of cervical cancer screening. The study recommends a paradigm shift from the current emphasis on mass media channels to the integration of interpersonal communication channels to improve the uptake of cervical cancer screening among women. Community health workers and practising nurses at healthcare facilities are ideally positioned to identify women's information needs and provide appropriate information.

KEY WORDS: Cervical cancer, Screening services, Interpersonal communication channels, Uptake, Uasin Gishu County.

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