

Abstract

The study was carried out at the Immuno Suppressed Syndrome Clinic in Mulago Hospital and was aimed at determining the prevalence of cervical cancer screening among women living with HIV, ascertaining the knowledge levels on cervical cancer screening among women living with HIV and identifying the attitudes towards cervical cancer screening among women living with HIV. The study adopted a descriptive cross sectional study using both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches involving use of questionnaires, interviews and document review of clinic files. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS and qualitative data was analyzed by summarizing according to major themes. The study sample was 385 and the duration was 14 months (June 2012 to July 2013). The results were presented according to the demographic features of the respondents, the prevalence of cervical cancer screening among women living with HIV, their knowledge and attitudes towards cervical cancer and its screening. The average age of the respondents was estimated at 39 years and majority of the respondents (375) lived within Kampala. The results revealed that respondents with no education which was 10% was higher than those who had tertiary education which was 8%. A total of 275 (72%) of the respondents had undergone cervical cancer screening. 58% of the respondents mentioned that the experience was not painful. Among the health professionals who had screened women for cervical cancer, nurses had performed more at 44% (169 respondents). Still at 28% (109 respondents) was the number that had never screened for cervical cancer. Of the 385 respondents, 368 (96%) had heard of cervical cancer and most of them had heard about it from more than one source of information. Many of the respondents thought that cervical cancer affects women only (71%) and 19 respondents did not know the cause of cervical cancer. Among the 385 respondents, 272 (71%) believed that women living with HIV were at a greater risk of getting cervical cancer. Many of the respondents 254(66%) knew that cervical cancer was the leading cause of death among women in Uganda. Majority of the respondents were also aware of the availability of screening services. Many of the respondents agreed that they would encourage other women to go for cervical cancer screening. The study also showed that majority of the women (67%) did not want a woman to be operated upon to remove her infected cervix

The study revealed that women living with HIV had adequate knowledge on cervical cancer and screening. It also revealed that women living with HIV had reasonable attitudes towards cervical cancer and screening. The study recommended that similar studies should be conducted in other health facilities in both rural and urban settings.