

ABSTRACT

Introduction:

Cervical cancer is the commonest cause of death among women in developing countries, with Uganda ranked 9th among countries with the biggest burden of the disease and having registered cases standing at 44.4% per 100,000 women. As a result, the study was carried out with the objectives of identifying the socio-demographic factors, determining the level of knowledge on Pap smear screening as well as identifying the perception related factors affecting Pap smear screening among women aged 12-50 years within Amuria district.

Methodology:

Using a cross sectional research design and adopting both quantitative and qualitative research approaches, the study was able to acquire information. Using Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the study used a sample of 161 respondents although only 150 filled the questionnaires well. Both primary data and secondary data were used in this study. To collect the necessary information, a self structured questionnaire was used after which data was cleaned, edited, coded and computed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) to extract graphs, frequency tables and percentages.

Results:

As per the study, women's decision to have a Pap smear test is influenced by socio-demographic factors such as level of income, marital status, education level and poverty with responses of (Income level = 70.6%, level of education = 55.3%, marital status = 55.3%, poverty = 80%). Furthermore, the findings revealed that knowledge about cervical cancer (78.3%), dissemination of information (80%), level of awareness (71.3%) as well as having information about diagnosis of cervical contribute to the prevention and treatment of the disease among women.

On the other hand, poor perception, negative attitudes and beliefs about cervical cancer (67.3%), cultural norms (58%), perceived risk and severity (67.3%), fear of having cancer and anxiety (70.7%) among women were the perception related factors discouraging women to have a Pap smear test.

Conclusion:

As per the study, women's decision to have a Pap smear test is influenced by among others; socio-demographic factors, knowledge about cervical cancer as well as the perception, beliefs and attitudes.

Recommendations:

The researcher recommended that the authorities within Amuria district should sensitize people about screening programs for cervical cancer. The government should equip health facilities with better equipment and hospitals should offer continuous training as well as making routine follow-up on patients after treatment. This will encourage patients to take advantage of early detection for better treatment.