The impact on referrals for a clinical suspicious cervix on a colposcopy department.

Dr Kate Glennon, Tallaght University Hospital, Dublin Ireland
Dr Gunther Von Banau, Tallaght University Hospital Dublin, Ireland

CervicalCheck is a free smear test offered to women aged 25 to 60 years and has been in operation in Ireland since 2008. Over the last ten years, it has provided three million smears to 1.8 million women, with over 280,000 women per year getting the test.

Over 1,480 cases of cervical cancer were notified to the CervicalCheck programme since 2008.

Objectives

Physicians can refer for colposcopy if concerned regarding a clinically suspicious cervix or a clinical history. In Ireland, in April 2018, a free smear test was offered to women who wished to avail of this outside the screening programme. This audit investigated the impact this had on referrals for a clinical indication and subsequent cancer diagnosis.

Methods

A retrospective review of referrals for a clinical indication from October 2017– February 2019 was conducted. The audit concentrated on referrals outside the routine screening programme. A search was conducted of referrals for suspicious cervix, post-menopausal bleeding, inter-menstrual bleeding and post coital bleeding. Referral data and outcomes was recorded from the mediscan system. Data was analysed using Microsoft Excel.

Results

Following the introduction of a free smear, the waiting time for non-urgent colposcopy rose from 4 weeks to 12-20 weeks. The referrals for a 'clinical suspicion' rose from 79 in the first six months (10/10/17 – 1/3/18) to 705 in the preceding six months.

Referral Source	Number (Total 149)	%	Number (Total 741)	%
College Dr	1	1.26	3	0.42
Family planning	3	3.79	20	2.83
GP	46	58.22	590	83.8
GUM	-	-	3	0.42
GOPD	14	17.7	37	5.24
WWC	3	3.79	18	2.55
Private rooms	1	1.26	3	0.42
Other	4	5.06	30	4.25

Referral cytology	Number	%	Number	%
BNA	2	1.81	33	5.22
Glandular neoplasia				
Inadequate	1	0.9	12	1.89
Mild dyskaryosis			7	1.10
Moderate dyskaryosis	-		4	0.63
Severe dyskaryosis	-		7	1.10
No smear	48	43.63	195	30.8
Normal	57	57.8	338	53.4

The number of referrals from GPs rose from 58% (n = 46) to 83% (n = 590). The total number of cancers diagnosed following a clinical suspicious indication was eight (0.93). Two cases of cancer were diagnosed in the first six months (2.53%), six were diagnosed in the preceding six months (0.85%). Six cases of subsequently diagnosed cancer were referred and seen as urgent (75%). Two cancers were diagnosed following a non-urgent referral. The majority of referrals had a normal colposcopy (n = 29 36.5%, 418 59.29%). *

Conclusion

Despite extra demand on the colposcopy department, the majority of subsequently diagnosed cancers were referred as urgent and seen promptly. The majority of clinically suspicious cervix resulted in a reassuring colposcopy