



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Role of mass media in understanding about cervical cancer and its screening among married women.

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**ABSTRACT... Objectives:** To discover role of mass media in cervical cancer and its screening awareness with socio-demographic profile, understanding, source of information and advocacy towards the disease. **Study Design:** Descriptive study. **Setting:** OPD of Gynecology and Obstetrics Department, Shaikh Zayed Hospital, Lahore, Pakistan. **Period:** 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2022. **Material & Methods:** Participants were selected via convenient sampling technique. Data was analyzed through SPSS version 24. **Results:** 17% respondents agreed that mass media has attributed to cervical cancer awareness while 83% were not familiar with the disease. 93% and 7% respondents had poor and good understanding, respectively. 36% respondents attained information from doctors/health care workers. Whereas, 68% and 32% respondents had found mass media imperative and had not found significant in cervical cancer and its screening advocacy, respectively. **Conclusion:** The study revealed poor understanding but with the help of health care workers, print and digital media, respondent's knowledge on cervical cancer and its screening may enhance as well as awareness on their health spectrum may broaden.

**Key words:** Advocacy, Cervical Cancer and Its Screening, Knowledge, Married Women, Mass Media, Understanding.

### INTRODUCTION

Cervical cancer besides being preventable and curable<sup>1</sup>; unfortunately, half a million women would die of cervical cancer in future and among them 98% would occur in developing countries like Pakistan as predicted by WHO<sup>2</sup> and approximately 50-90 % of females were never screened.<sup>1</sup> It is the third most common malignancy amid women over the globe with 5008 cases and mortality being 3197 per year in Pakistan<sup>3</sup> that could have been controlled efficiently through prevention. But unfortunately, these measures remain inaccessible to the majority.<sup>4</sup>

Global policy was also made to expedite the eradication of cervical cancer which has become a global problem and 90-70-90 targets were made in order to combat this issue to be met by 2030.<sup>5</sup> In addition, International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) marks January as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, thereby promotes WHO

strategy of triple intervention i.e. prevention, early detection and treatment for cervical malignancy.<sup>4</sup>

A study conducted by Fonnes and his co-authors<sup>6</sup> had found that media coverage in cancer awareness is 41%; whereas another study surveyed the role of print and audiovisual media in improving cervical cancer and its screening awareness.<sup>7</sup> Thus, mass media plays an integral part in increasing awareness regarding screening of cervical cancers.<sup>8</sup> This study highlights awareness about cervical cancer and role of mass media in local population.

### Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Highlights association of socio-demographic profile of a married women with respect to media attributed to cervical cancer and its screening
2. Elaborate the understanding of married

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women as well as their source of information about cervical cancer and its screening.

3. Evaluate the advocacy of married women through mass media in cervical cancer and its screening awareness

## MATERIAL & METHODS

This cross sectional study was designed involving quantitative research method which was done through self-administered questionnaire after reviewing the studies already published.<sup>1,9,10</sup> The questionnaire was pretested on 15 participants before the study to validate and amend the questions accordingly. The research included all the women presenting in OPD of Gynecology and Obstetrics department of Shaikh Zayed Hospital, Lahore, Pakistan using convenient sampling (i.e. non-probability sampling technique) over a period of 1-8-2022 to 31-10-2022.

This study includes married women (20-60 years of age) visiting Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology of Shaikh Zayed Hospital, Lahore, Pakistan while, those who had systemic diseases, cancer and had psychological issues were excluded from the study. Structured questionnaire was designed in English language and data was collected by the researcher. Before the commencement of our research, pretesting of questionnaire was performed; which ensures the accurateness and reliability of our research tool designed; also give us the considerate about the respondents understanding towards questionnaire.

IBM SPSS Statistics Version 24 was used to analyze the data. Binary logistic regression i.e. cross-tabulation and a p-value (<0.05 was considered statistically significant) was used to define the association of socio-demographic factors with mass media attribution in cervical cancer awareness. Pie chart was used to elaborate the source of information and bar chart was used to discuss the understanding and advocacy of married women in disease awareness.

## Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was taken from IRB of Shaikh Zayed Medical Complex [ID: SZMC/TERC/

Internal/397/2022], Lahore, Pakistan before the study takes place. Informed consent was also obtained from the married women recruited in our research.

## RESULTS

### Association of socio-demographic factors with media attributed to cervical cancer and its screening

The research investigated association of socio-demographic factors such as age of respondents, their age at marriage, education, parity, occupation, monthly household income and family history of cervical malignancy with media attributed to cervical cancer and its screening. Thus, the research identified 1053 respondents; out of which 179(17%) respondents perceived positive role of mass media in cervical cancer and its screening whereas, 874(83%) of them had not found significant role of media in cervical cancer and its screening awareness. Association of socio-demographic factors with media attributed to cervical cancer and its screening was analyzed through frequency, percentages and p-values and was shown in Table-I.

### Understanding about cervical cancer and its screening

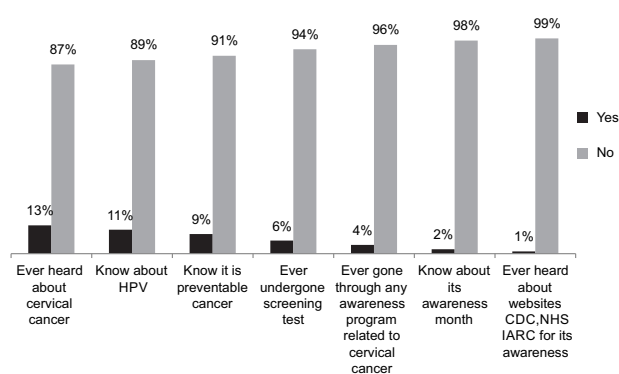
Statistical data (Figure-1) concluded that from 1053 respondents; on an average their understanding towards cervical cancer is only 7% whereas 93% respondents had poor understanding towards the disease.

### Source of information regarding cervical cancer and screening

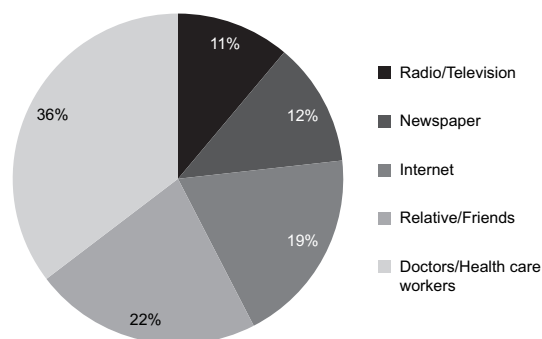
From 137 (13%) ever heard about cervical cancer (as mentioned in Figure-1), this study identified that most of the respondents gets information from doctors/health care workers i.e. 50 (36%) and whereas, very less percentage of respondents had found radio/Television as a good source of information towards the disease i.e. 15 (11%) as shown in Figure-2.

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and its association with media attributed to cervical cancer and its screening				
Socio-demographic Characteristics	Total N=1053	Media Attributed to Cervical Cancer and Its Screening		P-Value
		Yes 179 (17%)	No 874 (83%)	
<b>Age of respondents (years)</b>				
20-30	330 (31%)	16 (9%)	314 (36%)	p<0.001*
31-40	273 (26%)	20 (11%)	253 (29%)	
41-50	251 (24%)	41 (23%)	210 (24%)	
51-60	199 (19%)	102 (57%)	97 (11%)	
<b>Respondents age at marriage (years)</b>				
Less than and equal to 20	591 (56%)	84 (47%)	507 (58%)	p<0.08
Greater than 20	462 (44%)	95 (53%)	367 (42%)	
<b>Education</b>				
Illiterate	273 (26%)	2 (1%)	271 (31%)	p<0.003*
Primary Education	215 (20%)	5 (3%)	210 (24%)	
Secondary education	200 (19%)	34 (19%)	166 (19%)	
Higher secondary education	189 (18%)	49 (27%)	140 (16%)	
Bachelors and above	176 (17%)	89 (50%)	87 (10%)	
<b>Parity</b>				
0	411 (39%)	4 (2%)	407 (47%)	p<0.04*
1	242 (23%)	30 (17%)	212 (24%)	
2	211 (20%)	57 (32%)	154 (18%)	
3 and more	189 (18%)	88 (49%)	101 (11%)	
<b>Occupation</b>				
Housewife	355 (34%)	23 (13%)	332 (38%)	p<0.06
Self –employee	261 (25%)	27 (15%)	234 (27%)	
Private employee	237 (22%)	36 (20%)	201 (23%)	
Government employee	200 (19%)	93 (52%)	107 (12%)	
<b>Monthly Household Income</b>				
Less than 10,000	413 (39%)	16 (9%)	397 (45%)	p<0.0002*
10,000-30,000	250 (24%)	23 (13%)	227 (26%)	
30,000-50,000	218 (21%)	34 (19%)	184 (21%)	
Greater than 50,000	172 (16%)	106 (59%)	66 (8%)	
<b>Family history of cervical malignancy</b>				
Yes	42 (4%)	13 (7%)	29 (3%)	0.07
No	1011 (96%)	166(93%)	845 (97%)	

**Table-I. Association of socio-demographic factors with media attributed to cervical cancer and its screening awareness. \*Statistically significant (p ≤ 0.05)**



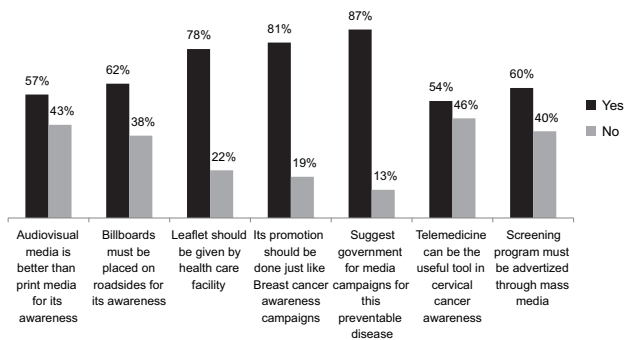
**Figure-1. Understanding about cervical cancer and its screening**



**Figure-2. Source of information regarding cervical cancer its screening**

### Advocacy through mass media in cervical cancer and its screening awareness

Respondents' advocacy through mass media in cervical cancer and its screening was described in Figure-3. From total respondents (N=1053); results concluded that on average 68% respondents said yes i.e. mass media can play vital role in cervical cancer and its screening advocacy through audiovisual media (57%), billboard on road sides (62%), leaflets at health care facility (78%), awareness programs (81%), media campaigns (87%), telemedicine (54%) and advertisement of screening programs (60%) whereas, from 1053 respondents; on an average 32% respondents had not found significant role of mass media in its awareness program.



**Figure-3. Advocacy through mass media in cervical cancer awareness**

### DISCUSSION

From total respondents (N=1053), this present study on an average highlights 93% poor understanding for cervical cancer and its screening; was found consistent with the research conducted in Bangladesh.<sup>11</sup>

### Socio-demographic factors with media attributed to cervical cancer and its screening awareness

In this study, older age women were more interested for cervical cancer screening than younger one; relatable with the study conducted in rural Ethiopia.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, level of education allows women to not only improves their perception about the disease but also enhances their awareness on the importance of undergoing cervical cancer screening and was found congruent with the research conducted in West, Wollega, Ethopia.<sup>13</sup>

Also, women with more children were able to receive awareness about cervical cancer risk factors, prevention and early screening through health care workers during their antenatal and postnatal visits; these results aligned with the study carried out in rural India.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, a study from Karachi, Pakistan<sup>1</sup> also supports our findings i.e. high monthly household income was found significantly associated with cervical cancer awareness.

### Understanding about cervical cancer and its screening

In this study, respondents who had ever heard about cervical cancer and had knowledge about HPV and HPV vaccine were 13% and 11% respectively. These study findings were found consistent with the researches carried out in Pakistan<sup>9</sup> and South India<sup>15</sup> respectively. This study also revealed less percentage of respondents know about cervical cancer as preventable and had gone for screening test i.e. 9% and 6% respectively; were found relatable with the studies conducted in Saudi Arabia<sup>16</sup> and Pakistan<sup>1</sup> respectively.

Moreover, awareness programs are urgently needed to raise community awareness on prevention of disease<sup>17</sup>; coincides with our findings i.e. 96% respondents never gone through any awareness program on cervical cancer screening. In our study, 98% respondents do not know about cervical cancer awareness month; was found consistent with the study carried out in Japan.<sup>18</sup> Although, websites like CDC, NHS, and IARC disseminate useful information on cervical cancer and on its screening.<sup>19,20,5</sup>; but sadly, in our study, only 1% respondents ever heard about these websites for their awareness.

### Source of information with respect to cervical cancer and its screening awareness

In this study, health care professionals' plays significant role in spreading appropriate information on cervical cancer screening and Pap smear testing and with the help of mass media; educational program should be arranged that provides adequate training and improves women awareness on cervical cancer and its screening;

was found congruent with the study conducted in Tabriz, Iran.<sup>21</sup>

### Advocacy through mass media in cervical cancer and its screening awareness

Individuals with low levels of literacy sometimes do not understand a simple text and prefer audiovisual media i.e. advertisements, graphics and visual information than print media.<sup>7</sup> These findings aligns with our results i.e. 57% respondents choose audiovisual media over print media. This study also identified billboards and leaflets should be used; because they deliver motivational and educational information on cervical cancer screening<sup>8</sup> and HPV vaccination opportunities as well as on cervical cancer prevention<sup>22</sup> respectively.

This study also revealed that cervical cancer awareness campaigns should be arranged; were found to be very helpful in early detection of disease that leads to high survival rates. These findings were well supported by the study conducted in Qatar.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, study also suggests that government to arrange media campaigns on cervical cancer as well as vaccine cost and facility in diagnosis of disease must be at affordable prices; these findings were found relevant with Khan and his co-authors<sup>9</sup> study.

In this study, respondents also suggests that telemedicine can be used as effective tool in early detection of cancer by sharing pictures of cervix with consultants via digital cameras; was well-supported with Arviliana and his co-associates<sup>24</sup> findings. Also, community information channels such as radio, television and advertisements raises cervical cancer awareness and engages large population in short period of time<sup>25</sup>; well supports our findings i.e. cervical cancer screening programs must be advertised through mass media.

### LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The findings of this study have to be seen in light of some limitations. This study confined to single center. The patients addressed were from tertiary care hospital who have better understanding and educational status but still has lack of awareness.

We did not evaluated knowledge, attitude and practice regarding cervical screening and HPV vaccination in detail.

### CONCLUSION

The study discovered poor understanding towards the disease but with the help of doctors/health care personnel's and advocacy through mass media disseminates significant and reliable information that improves their health behaviors and increases access to cervical cancer screening services. Thus, this is need of an hour to create awareness through mass media for this preventable cancer.

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


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No.	Author(s) Full Name	Contribution to the paper	Author(s) Signature
1	Ayesha	Conception and design of study, Data collection.	
2	Amna Javed	Design of study, Data collection, Finalizing the manuscript.	
3	Rukiya Tariq	Data acquisition and manuscript writing.	
4	Muhammad IKram	Finalized & revised the manuscript.	
5	Sana Danish	Data acquisition and revised the manuscript.	