

Chapter 3

Effect of Electronic Media Sources on Cervical Cancer Awareness Among Women in Kenya: Case Study of Reproductive Health Clinics at the Kenyatta National Hospital, Nairobi County, Kenya

Rhoydah O.M. Nyambane
Technical University of Kenya, Kenya

ABSTRACT

This chapter is based on a study set out to investigate the influence of electronic media in creating awareness about cervical cancer among women in Kenya at the Kenyatta National Hospital. Transtheoretical stages of change and Health Belief Model guided the study. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in line with the study objectives, while qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The study findings indicated that radio and television had not played a key role in creating awareness about cervical cancer as less than 20% of respondents reported to have received their information from radio and televisions while over 74% reported to have received their information from other sources other than radio and television. This was despite the fact that more than 90% of the respondents reported to own a radio and/or a television. The study concluded that cervical cancer prevention cannot be achieved through messages on traditional media such as radio and television. It therefore recommended a multi-sectoral approach by relevant stakeholders through other diverse strategies such as interpersonal communication.

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INTRODUCTION

Cervical cancer continues to be a leading killer among women despite a vibrant media in Kenya that should create awareness about its prevention. Lack of proper information from credible sources in terms of symptoms, prevention, treatment and management have further complicated the cervical cancer situation among women in Kenya. Electronic media has been identified as influential in creating awareness about cervical cancer and, ultimately, its prevention but not much is being done to respond to the scourge. The main objective of the study was to establish the source of information about cervical cancer prevention among the targeted population. The study was conducted among women accessing reproductive services at Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi, Kenya.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Worldwide, there are over 10 million new cases of cervical cancer and more than 6 million deaths from cancer annually. Two decades ago these figures were 6 million and 4 million respectively (Zomatis *et al.*, 1990). Of the ten million cancer cases each year, 4.7 million are in the less developed countries. Although the disease has often been regarded as a problem of the developed world, in fact, more than half of all cancers occur in the developing countries, where it is reported that cancer is the second most common cause of deaths, and epidemiological evidence points to the emergency of similar trend in developing countries. Cancer is currently the cause of 12% of all deaths worldwide (WHO Report, 2001).

The problem is compounded by a number of reasons, among them: not feeling at risk, lack of symptoms, carelessness, fear of vaginal examination, fear of bad results (Urasa Dar, 2011). The problem is further aggravated by poor knowledge levels among the vulnerable populations.

In Kenya, cervical cancer is the second most frequent cancer among women and the leading cause of cancer deaths in women of reproductive age (WRA) with a rate of 39,000 deaths per year (Kenya Ministry of Public Health, 2009). Data from hospital-based registries in Kenya indicate that cancer of the cervix accounted for 70-80% of all cancers of the genital tract and 8-20% of all cancer cases and these statistics do not reflect the cases that go unreported and those in the rural areas. It has been reported that there are 10 to 15 new cases of cervical cancer in Nairobi each week (Kenya Cancer Registry, 2009).

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