

Cervical Cancer Screening in Serbia-Evaluation and Challenges

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Introduction:

Former Yugoslavian Republic Serbia had opportune cervical cancer screening, based on Papanikolau test, since 1967. After Yugoslavia fell apart, Serbia was ranked in 2002 as a country with the highest incidence of cervical cancer in Europa. In 2008 mortality rate increased for 14.3%. Hence, the aim of this study was to evaluate the burden of cervical cancer screening in Serbia and to present the current status.

Methods:

For evaluation, comparative data resulting from several studies related to cervical cancer screening and screening projects in Serbia were used, for the period 2002–2013.

Results:

MoH and EU funds implemented several projects and the main achievements have been: National Committee for Prevention of Cervical Cancer established in July 2006 which prepared National Program for Cervical Cancer Screening, adopted in 2009 and updated in 2013 (with HPV test as triage test for ASCUS > 35y and Official report for follow up of positive women). National Office for Screening was founded in 2013. Public health workers, gynecologists, cytotechnicians and pathologists increased work quality throughout trainings with foreign experts and in 2017 Serbia started with HPV vaccination for boys and girls (from the age of 12). There were also many drawbacks: from fifteen equipped Central laboratories for reading Pap smear with pathologist supervision, only four operate currently. Screening information system is still on paper and consequently collected data and follows up, is insufficient. Coverage is low, because addresses discrepancy through population lists is almost 30% and funding is the biggest problem.

Conclusion

Political pressure to organized screening starts and on the other side, disapproval of additional funding, can significantly affect the quality of screening in Serbia.