

Title: Cervical cancer screening for irregular migrant women in Turin: an organizational strategy to involve a hard-to-reach subgroup of population.

Authors: Giordano L, Gallo F, Garena F, Caprioglio A, Castagno R

Affiliation: Epidemiologia, Screening e Registro Tumori - CPO, Turin - Italy

Abstract

Background: Irregular migrants (people without a legal status) are a problematic and complex matter to address in health care, in general, and in cancer prevention in particular. In most of their countries of origin screening is absent or poorly implemented and the incidence of cervical cancer is high.

In Turin, a Northern Italian town with about 1,000,000 inhabitants, estimates counted about 3,000 illegal female immigrants in 2015. This population cannot be reached by screening invitation, so alternative screening facilities must be considered.

Methods: A network was built among screening specialists and operators who deal with health and immigration, encouraging a mutual exchange of information and experiences.

Meetings have been organized with cultural mediators of socio-cultural associations and community leaders of the most representative ethnic groups in Turin aiming at: 1) sensitizing these women to cervical cancer prevention, 2) offering the opportunity to perform at least a Pap test, within an organized screening program, in a dedicated facility.

Results:

- 1) A dedicated structure has been identified in the most important reception centre for immigrants in Turin (SERMIG).
- 2) Training activities has been provided for health professionals, midwives and cultural mediators in order to receive adequately these women.
- 3) A culturally sensitive multilingual campaign has been organized and informative material disseminated through local organizations, health providers and migrants organizations.
- 4) Specific screening agenda and organizational modalities have been defined to facilitate the access of this target group (spontaneous access, reserved days/hours).
- 5) Protection of personal data have been guaranteed to safeguard their condition.
- 6) Ad-hoc database connected with the screening program has been created.

Evaluation on screening outcomes among irregular women is in progress.

Conclusions: Irregular women, though numerically low, represent a challenging issue for cancer screening programs if they want to respect the ethics principles they are build upon.