

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Awareness of Cervical Cancer, Papanicolaou's Smear and Its Utilisation among Female Undergraduates in Ibadan

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Abstract

A survey was conducted among 421 undergraduates of the University of Ibadan using self-administered questionnaires probing into their risk factors for neoplastic cervical lesions, awareness of cervical cancer, Papanicolaou's smear and its utilisation. The percentage of sexually active respondents was 81.5%. Sexual exposure before the age of 20 years occurred in 51.7%. The mean age at sexual debut was 18.8 years while the modal age was 18 years. Fifty seven per cent had multiple sexual partners, but only 38.1% used condoms. Seventy one per cent were aware of cervical cancer, while only 33.5% were aware of Papanicolaou's smear. Awareness was found to be more among medical students and the married ones. On the other hand, only 8.3% of them had ever done a Papanicolaou's smear. There is a need to increase awareness and incorporate cervical screening into the pre-existing university health services. Also, logistic barriers to cervical screening need to be removed. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2004; 8[3]:68-80)

Keywords: Cervical cancer, sexuality, Papanicolaou's smear, undergraduates

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