



Contribution ID: 8

Type: **Poster Presentation Only**

Knowledge, Attitude and Uptake of Cervical Cancer Screening Among the Female Population at Gulu University:

Friday, September 19, 2025 10:22 AM (3 minutes)

Background

Cervical cancer (CaCx) is a significant public health issue, especially in low-resource settings like Uganda, where it remains the leading cause of cancer-related deaths among women. Cervical cancer screening plays a vital role in early detection and prevention. Yet, the knowledge and attitude of women, particularly university students and staff, towards screening practices is not well understood. This research project aimed to investigate the knowledge and attitude of the female population at Gulu University towards cervical cancer screening, to identify gaps and potential strategies for improving screening uptake.

Methods:

This was a cross-sectional study employing a quantitative research design conducted at Gulu University, involving 335 female students and staff aged 25-49 years from various academic programs. A stratified random sampling technique was used. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire after informed consent and analyzed using Stata version 18. Descriptive statistics were used to report knowledge, attitude, and uptake of cervical cancer screening.

Results:

A total of 335 participants completed the self-administered survey representing 99.7% and therefore the non-response rate was 0.3%. The median age was 27 years (IQR: 26-30). Most participants identified as Catholic (43.6%, n=146), followed by Anglican (32.5%, n=109). In terms of roles, 16.7% (n=56) were staff members, and 83.3% (n=279) were students. Among the students, 26.2% (n=73) were in their first year, 40.1% (n=112) in their second year, 24.7% (n=69) in their third year, and the rest in their third and fifth years. The study included students from various faculties, with the highest representation from the Faculty of Education (30.8%, n=103). Regarding knowledge, most participants (97.9%, n=328) had heard about cervical cancer, primarily from health institutions (50.0%, n=164). Less than half of participants 44.8% (n=150) correctly identified a virus as the causative agent. Overall, 83.3% (n=279) demonstrated good knowledge about cervical cancer. About 52.5% (n=176) of the participants demonstrated a negative attitude towards cervical cancer screening, while 47.5% (n=159) had a positive attitude. The uptake of cervical cancer screening was 31.3% with 105 participants reporting having been screened. Among those who had not been screened (n=230), the reasons included not being informed about screening places (35.4%, n=84), concerns about pain (32.9%, n=78), believing they were healthy (23.6%, n=56), and feeling shy (8.0%, n=19).

Conclusion: In our study, nearly all female students and staff at Gulu University were aware of cervical cancer, yet specific knowledge gaps about its causative agent and symptoms persist. Despite positive attitudes towards early detection, personal risk perception and screening uptake remain low, with only 31.3% having been screened. We recommend strengthening educational campaigns to address these knowledge gaps, enhancing the accessibility of screening services, and providing counseling to tackle personal barriers and misconceptions. Further research should evaluate effective implementation strategies to increase screening uptake, and reproductive health policies and practices should be strengthened, particularly in educational and healthcare settings.

Keywords: Cervical cancer, screening, knowledge, attitude, females, Gulu University

Author: Mr ANGUYO, Milton (gulu university)

Co-authors: Mr KOMAKEC, DAVID (gulu university); Mr ALYOOMU, Emmanuel (gulu university); Mr AZIKU, HABERT (gulu university); Dr PEBOLO, Pebalo (gulu university)

Presenter: Mr ANGUYO, Milton (gulu university)

Session Classification: Poster SRHR

Track Classification: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights