Diagnostic itinerary of women with cervical cancer using the Brazilian Unified Health System

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The mean time spent between the first symptoms of the disease or Pap (asymptomatic woman) up to the first oncological gynecologist appointment was 888.2 days (approximately 2 ½ years).

We suggest that active search actions be performed, such as the collection of signs and symptoms at home visits by health professionals working in primary health care, as well as the reorganization of the care provided in these services, in order to detect, as soon as possible, the first signs of the disease and streamline the diagnostic process.

Introduction

Pap test:
✓ Fast
✓ Cheap
✓ Easy to carry out

70% diagnosed in less developed regions
3rd most frequent type of cancer in women

15% of Brazilian women never did

Difficulties:
✓ Access
✓ Low resolubility
✓ Delay in diagnosis and treatment
✓ Fear, shame, lack of time

Objective

To describe and compare sociodemographic and clinical characteristics, as well as the diagnostic itinerary of women with cervical cancer using the Unified Health System in Brazil.

Method

This study is part of a doctoral thesis that is being performed at the Barretos Cancer Hospital and the A.C. Camargo Cancer Center.

We interviewed women with cervical cancer users of the Unified Health System, over 18 years of age and treatment time up to 18 months (Barretos Cancer Hospital and A.C. Camargo Cancer Center).

The women answered a questionnaire that contained socio-demographic and clinical information, as well as information about their diagnostic itinerary.

Results

73 participants
✓ Mean age 46.7 years old
✓ Most of them had a stable union
✓ Had up to 8 years of study
✓ They did not smoke
✓ Were working at the time of diagnosis
✓ Annual Pap exam or not do because shame or lack of commitment to their health
✓ The diagnosis was made, in the majority, after the participants had passed, on average, by two different doctors to reach the diagnosis.

Although the diagnostic time was long, 57.5% of the participants reported no difficulties in this process.

Difficulties more reported:
✓ Delays in the scheduling of exams and consultations
✓ Disorganization of health services
✓ Lack of information and guidance.

This research is being finalized with a larger number of participants. We are also developing a comparative study of the diagnostic itinerary of women users of the Unified Health System and private healthcare.

References