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Cervical cancer screening overview in pregnancy - evaluation and quality improvement

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Background: Cervical cancer (CC) is the sixth most diagnosed in Portugal (12.2 new cases and 3.6 deaths per 100,000 women). Peak prevalence of human papillomavirus (HPV) infection is 5 -7 years after sexual activity and can take 10-20 years to evolve through cancer. There are multiple opportunities to intervene early if CC screening is adequately applied. According to Portugal National Cancer Control Plan, pregnancy is one of those opportunities and it should be done until the end of first trimester. Eligible pregnant women are over 25 years old, who have never been screened or haven't been screened at more than three years ago after two negative annual screening results.

Aim: Evaluate coverage rate of CC screening of pregnant women, according to national guidelines of low risk pregnancy in two primary health care (PHC) units.

Methods: Descriptive and retrospective study including pregnant users aged over 25, guarded by family doctors of authors' two units. Data collected through Portuguese programs of electronic health records and statistics. Evaluation criteria: 1. First trimester of pregnancy included in evaluation period; 2. Age; 3. record of smear test done during first trimester of pregnancy or on time according with national guidelines. First evaluated period: year of 2012; reevaluated period: November 2013 to October 2014

Results: We included 100 women in first evaluation, with a screening rate of 65%; after presentation of results and national guideline and implementation of some educational measures, there was a discrete improvement at reevaluation period (screening rate of 71%).

Conclusions: Although these results are compatible with the goals for global coverage rates of CC screening at this region of the country, we expected to get better results, once this is a specific group of users of our PHC units. Improvement measures are being implemented and new reevaluation shall be done soon.

