



Journal of Nursing

Revista de Enfermagem

UFPE On Line

ISSN: 1981-8963

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND UNIVERSITY PRACTICES ON PREVENTION OF CERVICAL CANCER

CONHECIMENTO, ATITUDES E PRÁTICAS DE UNIVERSITÁRIAS SOBRE PREVENÇÃO DO CÂNCER CERVICOUTERINO

CONOCIMIENTO, ACTITUDES Y PRÁCTICAS DE UNIVERSITARIAS SOBRE LA PREVENCIÓN DEL CÁNCER DE CUELLO UTERINO

Bibiane Dias Miranda Parreira¹, Lorena Campos Mendes², Heloisa Pelisser Canton³, Nathália Silva Gomes⁴, Maurícia Brochado Oliveira Soares⁵, Sueli Riul da Silva⁶

RESUMO

Objetivo: descrever o conhecimento, atitudes e práticas de acadêmicas sobre a prevenção do câncer cervicouterino. **Método:** estudo seccional, com abordagem quantitativa, realizado com 298 alunas do primeiro período dos cursos de graduação de uma universidade federal, a partir da aplicação de questionário. A análise das variáveis se deu pela estatística descritiva expressa em frequências absolutas e percentuais. **Resultados:** a maioria das acadêmicas é jovem, dependente financeiramente, solteira, apresenta conhecimento adequado sobre o exame Papanicolaou e sua importância. Metade apresenta conhecimento adequado em relação à periodicidade de realização do exame, população-alvo prioritária e importância da utilização de preservativos. Quanto a atitudes e práticas de realização do exame, a minoria o realiza regularmente. **Conclusão:** é necessária a criação de estratégias que despertem nas acadêmicas o interesse sobre a prevenção do câncer cervicouterino e realização periódica do exame Papanicolaou. **Descritores:** Educação em Saúde; Enfermagem; Esfregaço Vaginal; Saúde da Mulher.

ABSTRACT

Objective: to describe the knowledge, attitudes and practices of academics on cervical cancer prevention. **Method:** a sectional study with a quantitative approach, carried out with 298 students from the first period of undergraduate courses at a federal university, from the application of a questionnaire. The analysis of the variables was given by the descriptive statistics expressed in absolute and percentage frequencies. **Results:** the majority of the students are young, financially dependent, unmarried, present adequate knowledge about the Pap smear and its importance. Half presents adequate knowledge regarding the periodicity of the exam, priority target population and the importance of condom use. Regarding attitudes and practices of conducting the examination, the minority does it regularly. **Conclusion:** it is necessary to create strategies that arouse in the academic the interest about cervical cancer prevention and periodic Pap smear. **Descriptors:** Health Education; Nursing; Vaginal Smears; Women's Health.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: describir los conocimientos, actitudes y prácticas académicas sobre prevención del cáncer cervical. **Método:** estudio seccional con enfoque cuantitativo, realizado con 298 estudiantes en el primer periodo de los cursos de graduación de una universidad federal, a partir de la aplicación de los cuestionarios. El análisis de las variables si dio por la estadística descriptiva expresada en frecuencias absolutas y porcentuales. **Resultados:** la mayoría de las académicas son jóvenes, económicamente dependiente, solteras, tienen conocimientos adecuados acerca del examen de Papanicolaou y su importancia. La mitad presenta conocimiento adecuado con respecto a la periodicidad del examen, población atingida prioritaria y la importancia del uso de condones. Cuánto a las actitudes y prácticas de examen a la minoría realiza periódicamente. **Conclusión:** es necesario crear estrategias que despiertan el interés de las académicas sobre la prevención de cáncer de cuello uterino y examen periódico de Papanicolaou. **Descritores:** Educación en Salud; Enfermería; Frotis Vaginal; Salud de la Mujer.

^{1,5}Nurses, PhDs, Federal University of the Triângulo Mineiro / UFTM. Uberaba (MG), Brazil. Email: bibianedias@yahoo.com.br; Mauricia_olive@yahoo.com.br; ^{2,4}Nurses, Masters, PhD students, Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro, Uberaba (MG), Brazil. E-mail: lorena_camposmendes@hotmail.com; Nathaliasg0903@gmail.com; ³Nurse Assistant, Federal University of the Triângulo Mineiro / UFTM. Uberaba (MG), Brazil. E-mail: helioisa_canton@hotmail.com; ⁶Nurse, Professor, PhD, Federal University of the Triângulo Mineiro / UFTM. Uberaba (MG), Brazil. E-mail: sueliriul@terra.com.br

INTRODUCTION

The problem of cancer (CA) in Brazil has stood out and, with it, gained space in the political and technical agendas of the government. According to estimates by the World Health Organization (WHO) for the year 2030, it is expected to occur 27 million cases of CA and 17 million deaths from neoplasms, with the highest incidence occurring in low and middle-income countries Income.¹

In this perspective, according to data from the National Cancer Institute (INCA), in Brazil, estimates for 2016, also valid for 2017, indicate the occurrence of approximately 596 new cases of neoplasia.¹ It is worth noting that, The AC of the cervix as the third most incident type in the female population. According to INCA, the number of new cases of cervical uterine CA expected in Brazil in 2014 was 15,590, with an estimated risk of 15 cases per 100,000 women.² The ratio between mortality and incidence for the CA of the cervix The death rate of 265,000 women in the year 2012, with 87% of these deaths occurring among women in developing countries.² By 2016, 16,340 new cases of CA of the cervix, with an estimated risk of 16 cases per 100,000 women.¹

The strategy implemented in Brazil for the control of cervical cancer is the Pap smear exam in women between 25 and 64 years of age, guarantee of organization, completeness and quality of services and actions of the line of care, as well as the treatment And follow-up of patients.²

The importance of the use of efficient methods in the tracing of this neoplasia, which includes an effective coverage of the population for the accomplishment of this examination, the quality in the collection and interpretation of the material and of the treatment and adequate follow-up, so that the women feel it, If they are motivated to perform the Pap smear and have at their disposal an adequate service network capable of meeting their needs. ³ However, since there are still women who are unaware of the purpose of the Pap smear, it is necessary to structure permanent educational activities that sensitize the Women on the exam⁴, even in differentiated populations. It was observed that nursing students from a university in the Northeast of Brazil, have the most inadequate knowledge about the exam.⁵

It is important to verify the knowledge of undergraduate students about the subject in order to carry out educational activities, since in the future they will be users of the tracking programs and, many of them, disseminators of

information. In this context, the objective was:

- To describe the knowledge, attitudes and practices of academics on cervical cancer prevention.

METHOD

A sectional study, with a quantitative approach, conducted at the Federal University of the Triângulo Mineiro (UFTM), involving 23 undergraduate courses in health, human and exact areas.

The study population consisted of 298 students from the first period of undergraduate courses. Students over 18 years of age, regularly enrolled in the first semester or first year of the annual courses were included. Those that did not fit the inclusion criteria or those that refused to participate in the survey were excluded.

Data collection took place from August to December 2012, and was carried out through the application of a structured questionnaire constructed by the authors based on a detailed review of the scientific literature and consultation with the guidelines of the Brazilian Ministry of Health.

The students were approached and clarified about the importance and objective of the research and the procedures to which they would be submitted. After the acceptance of these and the signing of the Informed Consent Term (TCLE), the self-applicative instrument of data collection was distributed in the classroom during breaks or at the end of the didactic activities and with the consent and Authorization of the responsible teacher.

The instrument used questioned the socio-demographic characterization (age, occupation, income and marital status) and, on the knowledge, attitudes and practices adopted regarding the prevention of CA of the cervix.

The data was compiled in the Microsoft Excel® database. The technique of double digit validation was used in order to detect inconsistencies. For the statistical analysis, the data were imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 17.0.

The analysis of the quantitative and categorical variables was done by descriptive statistics and its interpretation was performed through a quantitative context and expressed in numerical and percentage form.

For the development of the study, the opinion and approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of UFTM, approved under protocol CEP / UFTM 2087/11, was

requested. It should be noted that the project followed Resolution 196/96, since its approval predates Resolution 466/12.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the 298 students who participated in the study, it was observed that the mean age was 20.30 years. The vast majority, 267 (89.6%), had their studies as the main daily occupation and 220 (73.8%) had no income of their own and were dependent on their relatives. Still, 260 (87.2%) were single and 185 (62.1%), were sexually active, of which, 82 (27.5%) reported having no fixed partner.

The data in this study is similar to those of other studies that characterize the profile of academic students of public universities in Brazil.⁵⁻⁸ Most are considered young, so, they enter higher education soon after finishing high school. They have study as the main occupation and depend on the income of family members, probably, because they attend university in day or full time, which can make employment difficult. The marital situation of the majority is single, showing that they prefer to postpone the officialization of fixed relationships, which does not exclude the existence of fixed or unfixed sexual partners.

Mapping the socio-demographic profile of a particular population under study is of great importance, since the knowledge of this population can vary due to age, occupation, schooling and marital status, influencing the direction of educational activities.

When asked about the knowledge about the Pap smear, 288 (96.6%) students said they knew the exam. Regarding the importance of the Pap smear, the vast majority, 257 (86.2%), said to be an important exam in the prevention of CA of the uterine cervix, given higher than that found in a study carried out with nursing students in the State of Piauí, where only 60 (40.5%) reported that the purpose of the examination is the detection and prevention of CA of the cervix.⁵

This difference can be due to the possible regional peculiarities that exist in Brazil. The AC of the uterine cervix is more incidental and presents a higher mortality in the Northeast, compared to the Southeast region.⁹ Possibly, the lack of knowledge regarding the importance of the examination in the control of this CA is one of the causes of its high morbidity and mortality.

It is important to note that, in this research, in spite of the great majority of the students being aware of the importance of the exam, 41 (13.8%) of the students claimed they did not know its importance. Thus, the need

to perform articulated and integrated actions with the intention of increasing the knowledge regarding the purpose of the Pap smear for the undergraduate students is perceived.

Asked about the relation between the Pap smear test and the detection of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), 209 (70.1%) of the interviewees said this was not an important test in the detection of these diseases. Regarding the importance of the examination in the detection of vaginal infections, 163 (54.7%) students stated that the Pap smear does not have this efficacy.

Periodic Pap smear examination is the strategy used to screen the uterine cervix because it detects precursor lesions that are still asymptomatic.⁹ The nomenclature used in the exams reports is currently based on the Bethesda System¹⁰, and describes the squamous and Their equivalences. Thus, the Pap smear result is not intended to diagnose STDs and vaginal infections. However, in relation to Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infection which is considered to be the main risk factor for uterine cervix CA¹⁰, the Pap smear only Suggests the possibility of its infection, being necessary diagnostic complementation.¹¹

Regarding the beginning of the examination, 233 (78.2%) students stated that the Pap smear should be performed by all women, who have or have had sexual intercourse. It is noteworthy that 36 students (12%) reported that the test should be started in all women, regardless of age or those older than 14 years.

The new Brazilian guidelines for cervical CA screening recommend the commencement of Pap smear collections at the age of 25 for women who have already had sexual activity.¹⁰ Thus, it is perceived that it is extremely important to elaborate actions That favor the increase of the knowledge of these academics in relation to the beginning of the preventive practices.

Regarding the frequency of Pap smears 150 (50.3%) students said that the test should be performed annually. Already 71 (23.8%) stated that it should be done every six months. According to the new Brazilian guidelines, triennial examinations are recommended after two negative annual examinations. However, the frequency becomes individualized, according to the results of the Pap smear, which may be up to six-monthly.⁹⁻¹⁰

It is observed, in the literature that women report an annual Pap smear period.^{4,7} So the results of this study are close to the practice of performing the examination, which is considered correct by the population. It

should be considered that subjecting women to examination more often than necessary can increase the costs of the health system. On the other hand, there is a need to verify if there is a veiled demand of women who have never performed the exam, either for personal reasons or for the organization and structuring of health services. Adherence to the appropriate periodicity for conducting the examination also implies the equitable distribution of the resources of the health system.

When analyzing the responses related to measures to prevent cervical CS, 154 (51.7%) female students reported that the use of condoms during sexual intercourse did not prevent the appearance of the cervix CA. Regarding the possible forms of prevention for CA of the cervix, 253 (84.9%) students claimed not to know these measures.

The analysis of these data is necessary since a large part of the population interviewed is unaware of the importance of using condoms as a means of preventing cancer. It is emphasized that factors associated with HPV infection, such as early onset of sexual activity, multiplicity of partners, sexual partner with multiple partners, smoking and recurrent genital infections, predisposes women to increased risk for cervical lesions and, consequently, development Of the AC of the cervix.¹²

Primary prevention is associated with the reduction of HPV infection, which includes the use of condoms during intercourse, as well as the bivalent and quadrivalent vaccines, which immunize the woman against HPV oncogenic subtypes.¹²

Regarding the frequency with which the student performs the Pap smear, only 98 (32.9%) of the students reported taking the exam annually, while 140 (47%) said they had never performed the exam. Considering that 185 (62.1%) reported being sexually active, of these, 82 (27.5%) reported having no fixed partner, it is notorious that part of the vulnerable students is not included in the context of the prevention of CAD in the cervix of the uterus.

Considering that, according to INCA data, it is estimated that a reduction of about 80% in the mortality of women aged 25-64 years per CA of the cervix can be achieved through Pap smears and by the treatment of precursor lesions with high potential for malignancy or carcinoma in situ¹³, the importance of periodic Pap smear by sexually active women is noted here.

It should be noted that this high rate of non-performance of the exam may be related

to some difficulties, which, in practice, are observed, acting as obstacles and preventing women from taking the exam. In this context, a study carried out in the state of Rio Grande do Sul showed, that the main impediments to the Pap smear, were the embarrassment during the test, lack of knowledge about its importance, fear of pain or positive result and low power Acquisition.³

In addition to the above results, another study shows that: living without a partner, not having given birth, not having had a medical visit in the last year and the low level of schooling are also factors that are associated with not performing the exam.¹⁴ Nursing, that stands out for its holistic education and directed to health education, can contribute effectively to the increase of adherence to the Pap smear exam¹⁵, through educational activities and orientations directed to the target population of the problem in question.

Emphasis is given to the need to expand access to information through health education campaigns, using techniques and languages appropriate to the population profile, emphasizing the periodicity of the examination, the active search of women and the improvement of quality Of health services, aiming at greater adherence to the examination and, consequently, reduction of mortality from related causes.¹⁶⁻¹⁷ Still, despite the orientation of inclusion of women in the age group of 25 to 64 years in the prevention programs of the Cervical cancer², it is verified that women under the age of 25 are as vulnerable as those of 25 years to the development of this cancer, and it is important that the prevention actions reach them, allowing a real impact on the target population.¹⁸

CONCLUSION

The accomplishment of this study made evident the need for the transmission of information regarding the Pap smear exam, which presents itself as a fundamental tool in Nursing care, since it was observed lack of knowledge related to the subject, as well as low adherence to the test. It was hoped to find a greater number of correct answers and adherence to the preventive practices of cervical cancer among young people with access to training and information.

The Pap smear is an important method for the prevention and diagnosis of cervical cancer, and the health professional and the media must act in an efficient way in their orientation and dissemination. Thus, these data point us to the need to create strategies and programs that arouse, in the academic,

Parreira BDM, Mendes LC, Canton HP et al.

the interest about the prevention of cervical cancer and periodic Pap smears.

It is pointed out, as limitations of this study, the fact that the data collection was done through a closed instrument, which did not allow the detailed exploration of the students' knowledge. Possibly, correct information traces would be found in discursive responses. However, the study points to the need to invest in training for the self-care of university students.

FUNDING

National Council for Scientific and Technological Development - CNPq

REFERENCES

1. Ministério da Saúde (BR), Instituto Nacional de Câncer José Alencar Gomes da Silva. Estimativa 2016: incidência de câncer no Brasil [Internet]. Rio de Janeiro: INCA; 2015 [cited 2016 Feb 10]. Available from: <http://www.inca.gov.br/wcm/dncc/2015/estimativa-2016.asp>
2. Ministério da Saúde (BR), Instituto Nacional de Câncer José Alencar Gomes da Silva. Estimativa 2014: incidência de câncer no Brasil [Internet]. Rio de Janeiro: INCA; 2014 [cited 2016 Feb 10]. Available from: http://www.saude.sp.gov.br/resources/ses/perfil/gestor/homepage/outros-destaques/estimativa-de-incidencia-de-cancer-2014/estimativa_cancer_24042014.pdf
3. Casarin MR, Piccoli JCE. Educação em saúde para prevenção do câncer de colo do útero em mulheres do município de Santo Ângelo/RS. Ciênc saúde coletiva [Internet]. 2011 [cited 2016 Feb 10];16(9):3925-32. Available from: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/csc/v16n9/a29v16n9.pdf>
4. Santiago TR, Andrade MS, Paixão GPN. Conhecimento e prática das mulheres atendidas na unidade de saúde da família sobre o Papanicolaou. Rev enferm UERJ [Internet]. 2014 Nov/Dec [cited 2016 Feb 10];22(6):822-9. Available from: <http://www.facenf.uerj.br/v22n6/v22n6a16.pdf>
5. Ribeiro KFC, Moura MSS, Brandão RGC, Nicolau AIO, Aquino PS, Pinheiro AKB. Student nurses' knowledge, attitude and practice regarding the papanicolaou examination. Texto contexto-enferm [Internet]. 2013 Apr/June [cited 2016 Feb 10];22(2):460-7. Available from: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/tce/v22n2/v22n2a23.pdf>
6. Bublitz S, Guido LA, Kirchhof RS, Neves ET, Lopes LFD. Sociodemographic and

Knowledge, attitudes and university practices...

- academic profile of nursing students from four Brazilian institutions. Rev Gaúcha Enferm [Internet]. 2015 Jan/Mar [cited 2016 Feb 10];36(1):77-83. Available from: http://www.scielo.br/pdf/rgenf/v36n1/pt_1983-1447-rgenf-36-01-00077.pdf
7. Souza GDS, Simões ALB, Sousa MF, Almeida EC, Soares RLM, Bueno SMV. Adesão e conhecimento de discentes de enfermagem sobre o exame Papanicolaou: uma proposta de abordagem crítico-social. Arq Cienc Saúde UNIPAR [Internet]. 2015 Jan/Mar [cited 2016 Feb 10];19(1):19-23. Available from: <http://revistas.unipar.br/index.php/saude/article/view/5260/3033>
 8. Aquino PS, Brito FEV. Perfil sexual de adolescentes universitários de um curso de graduação em enfermagem. REME rev min enferm [Internet]. 2012 July/Sept [cited 2016 Feb 10];16(3):324-9. Available from: <http://www.reme.org.br/artigo/detalhes/534>
 9. Ministério da Saúde (BR), Secretaria de Atenção à Saúde, Departamento de Atenção Básica. Controle dos cânceres do colo do útero e da mama [Internet]. 2nd ed. Brasília: Ministério da Saúde; 2013 [cited 2016 Feb 10]. Available from: http://bvsms.saude.gov.br/bvs/publicacoes/controle_canceres_colo_uterio_2013.pdf
 10. Ministério da Saúde (BR), Instituto Nacional de Câncer José Alencar Gomes da Silva. Diretrizes brasileiras para o rastreamento do câncer do colo do útero [Internet]. Rio de Janeiro: INCA; 2011 [cited 2016 Feb 10]. Available from: http://bvsms.saude.gov.br/bvs/publicacoes/inca/rastreamento_cancer_colo_uterio.pdf
 11. Santos UM, Souza SEB. Papanicolaou: diagnóstico precoce ou prevenção do câncer cervical uterino? Rev baiana saúde pública [Internet]. 2013 Oct/Dec [cited 2016 Feb 10];37(4):941-51. Available from: http://inseer.ibict.br/rbsp/index.php/rbsp/article/viewFile/420/pdf_448
 12. Ministério da Saúde (BR), Instituto Nacional de Câncer José Alencar Gomes da Silva. Ações de enfermagem para o controle do câncer: uma proposta de integração ensino-serviço [Internet]. 3rd ed. Rio de Janeiro: INCA; 2008 [cited 2016 Feb 10]. Available from: http://bvsms.saude.gov.br/bvs/publicacoes/coes_enfermagem_controle_cancer.pdf
 13. Ministério da Saúde (BR), Instituto Nacional de Câncer José Alencar Gomes da Silva. Estimativa 2010: incidência de câncer no Brasil [Internet]. Rio de Janeiro: INCA; 2009 [cited 2016 Feb 10]. Available from: http://bvsms.saude.gov.br/bvs/publicacoes/estimativa_2010_incidencia_cancer.pdf

Parreira BDM, Mendes LC, Canton HP et al.

Knowledge, attitudes and university practices...

14. Albuquerque KM, Frias PG, Andrade CLT, Aquino EML, Menezes G, Szwarcwald CL. Cobertura do teste de Papanicolaou e fatores associados à não-realização: um olhar sobre o Programa de Prevenção do Câncer do Colo do Útero em Pernambuco, Brasil. *Cad Saúde Pública* [Internet]. 2009 [cited 2016 Feb 10];25(Supl. 2):301-9. Available from: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/csp/v25s2/12.pdf>
15. Bim CR, Pelloso SM, Carvalho MDB, Previdelli ITS. Early diagnosis of breast and cervical cancer in women from the municipality of Guarapuava, PR, Brazil. *Rev Esc Enferm USP* [Internet]. 2010 Dec [cited 2016 Feb 10];44(4):939-44. Available from: http://www.scielo.br/pdf/reeusp/v44n4/en_12.pdf
16. Melo SCCS, Prates L, Carvalho MDB, Marcon SS, Pelloso SM. Alterações citopatológicas e fatores de risco para a ocorrência do câncer de colo uterino. *Rev Gaúcha Enferm* [Internet]. 2009 Oct/Dec [cited 2016 Feb 10];30(4):602-8. Available from: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/rgenf/v30n4/a04v3On4.pdf>
17. Cirino FMSB, Nichiata LYI, Borges ALV. Conhecimento, atitudes e práticas na prevenção do câncer de colo uterino e HPV em adolescentes. *Esc Anna Nery Rev Enferm* [Internet]. 2010 Jan/Mar [cited 2016 Feb 10];14(1):126-34. Available from: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/ean/v14n1/v14n1a19.pdf>
18. Silva BL, Santos RNLC, Ribeiro FF, Anjos UU, Ribeiro KSQS. Prevenção do câncer de colo uterino e a ampliação da faixa etária de risco. *Rev enferm UFPE on line* [Internet]. 2014 June [cited 2016 Feb 10];8(6):1482-90. Available from: <https://periodicos.ufpe.br/revistas/revistaenfermagem/article/viewFile/9836/10035>

Submission: 2016/02/19

Accepted: 2016/04/11

Publishing: 2017/05/15

Corresponding Address

Sueli Riul da Silva
Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro
Programa de pós Graduação em Atenção à Saúde
Rua Donaldo Silvestre Cicci, 665
CEP: 38082-166 – Uberaba (MG), Brazil

English/Portuguese

J Nurs UFPE on line., Recife, 11(Suppl. 5):2116-21, May, 2017