

Cervical cancer screening visit as an occasion for counseling female smokers to quit

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ABSTRACT

Aims and background. In the last decades in Italy, a smaller decrease in smoking among women than in men has been observed and a younger age at start in young women. Nevertheless, gender-specific strategies for smoking cessation have rarely been developed, except those for pregnant women. A study was conducted to evaluate the feasibility of carrying out an intervention of primary prevention by counseling for smoking cessation the female smokers attending cervical cancer screening programs in Florence, Italy.

Methods. All female smokers attending the services for cervical cancer prevention at the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute in Florence, Italy, between March 2004 and January 2005, who volunteered to participate in the study, received a brief motivational stage-matched counseling for smoking cessation and a face to face interview at enrollment and after 6 and 12 months. The counseling was evaluated by comparing quit rates, changes in smoking intensity, and motivation to quit at the first and second follow-up periods to the same data collected at enrollment. Multivariate logistic regression analysis was performed to estimate the influence on smoking cessation of demographic characteristics, smoking habit and attitude to quit.

Results. 177 women participated in the study. After 1 year, a quit rate of 12.4% (95% CI, 7.5-17.3) was observed. Among those who never quit, there was a 39.3% reduction in the average daily cigarette consumption and a 51.9% reduction in smoking the first cigarette of the day immediately on awaking or just after breakfast.

Conclusions. The results and the opportunity to contact a large number of female smokers on the occasion of cervical cancer screening suggest the importance to evaluate the efficacy of the intervention of primary prevention in this health setting.

Key words: cancer prevention, counseling, smoking cessation, women's health.

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