

ABSTRACT

Cancer of the cervix still remains a major public health problem in women worldwide especially in developing countries despite the existing interventions. Screening is one of the most cost effective control strategies for the disease. It was estimated that 529,409 new cases occurred globally in 2008, with 274,883 deaths (52% of cases). In Kenya, about 2,454 new cases of cervical cancer and 1,676 deaths occur annually. It is believed that new cases of cervical cancer will be at 4261 by 2025. Screening uptake in Kenya is low at just 3.2% and as much as uptake of screening has been assessed in other settings, uptake among vulnerable population along fish landing sites have been ignored. This was a cross sectional descriptive study that assessed uptake of cervical cancer screening among conveniently sampled 203 women at Koginga fish landing site in Homa Bay County. Though not part of the study population, the other group involved in the study were ten (10) health care providers. The objectives of the study were: to assess the level of knowledge and perception on cervical cancer screening among women in Koginga fish landing site; to determine the risk factors associated with cervical cancer among women in Koginga fish landing site and to determine barriers to cervical cancer screening uptake among women at Koginga fish landing site. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected by use of a semi-structured questionnaire and Key Informant Interviews (KII). The data was analyzed using STATA (version 13.1) and results presented in graphs, charts and tables. This study reports a cervical cancer screening awareness of 89.3%. Although majority of the respondents regarded the disease has life threatening, only 23% were able to go for cervical cancer screening. The knowledge on the risk factors associated with cervical cancer was low at around 50%. This research also observed a number of barriers to cervical cancer screening among them little or no understanding of the disease as well as lack of information about cervical cancer and screening itself. Ministry of Health should continuously educate the public on the importance of early and routine screening. Further, cervical cancer screening services should be integrated with other health services to enhance uptake. Future studies should carry out longitudinal studies to examine the barriers to cervical cancer uptake.