

Nurses' performance in the early detection of uterine cervical cancer: integrative review

RESUMO | Objetivo: Identificar a atuação do enfermeiro na detecção precoce do câncer de colo do uterino. Método: Trata-se de uma revisão integrativa, realizada em 2021, nas bases de dados SCIELO, PUBMED, LILACS, com os descritores: Neoplasias do Colo do Útero, Enfermagem e Cuidado Centrado no Paciente. A amostra foi de 16 artigos. Resultados: dentre as atuações do enfermeiro destacam-se: Educação em saúde sobre detecção precoce do câncer do colo uterino e incentivo à realização do exame citopatológico; orientação de enfermagem quanto a importância do uso de preservativo nas relações sexuais; consulta de enfermagem, realização do exame citopatológico; vacinação contra HPV; diagnóstico e tratamento precoces. Conclusão: O enfermeiro tem função primordial no decorrer de todo o processo de prevenção e promoção de saúde do câncer de colo uterino, prestando uma assistência integral e humanizada.

Descritores: Neoplasias do Colo do Útero; Enfermagem; Assistência centrada no paciente

ABSTRACT | Objective: To identify the role of nurses in the early detection of cervical cancer. Method: This is an integrative review, carried out from April to June 2021, in the SCIELO, PUBMED, LILACS databases, with the descriptors: Cervical Neoplasms, Nursing and Patient-Centered Care. Were found 1,389 articles, but the sample consisted of 16 articles. Results: among the nurses' actions, the following stand out: Health education on early detection of cervical cancer and encouragement to perform the Pap smear; nursing guidance on the importance of using condoms during sexual intercourse; nursing consultation, Pap smear test; HPV vaccination; early diagnosis and treatment. Conclusion: The nurse has a primary role throughout the entire process of prevention and health promotion of cervical cancer, providing comprehensive and humanized care.

Keywords: Uterine Cervical Neoplasms; Nursing; Patient-Centered Care

RESUMEN | Objetivo: Identificar el papel del enfermero en la detección precoz del cáncer cervicouterino. Método: Se trata de una revisión integradora, realizada de abril a junio de 2021, en las bases de datos SCIELO, PUBMED, LILACS, con los descriptores: Neoplasias Cervicales, Enfermería y Atención Centrada en el Paciente. Se encontraron 1389 artículos, pero la muestra estuvo conformada por 16 artículos. Resultados: entre las acciones de las enfermeras se destacan las siguientes: Educación en salud para la detección temprana del cáncer de cuello uterino y estímulo para la realización del Papanicolaou; orientación de enfermería sobre la importancia de usar condones durante las relaciones sexuales; consulta de enfermería, prueba de Papanicolaou; Vacunación contra el VPH; diagnóstico y tratamiento precoces. Conclusión: La enfermera tiene un rol primordial en todo el proceso de prevención y promoción de la salud del cáncer de cuello uterino, brindando una atención integral y humanizada.

Palabras claves: Neoplasias del Cuello Uterino; Enfermería; Atención Dirigida al Paciente

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INTRODUCTION

Cervical Cancer (CC) is a public health problem that plagues Brazil and affects women who have difficulty accessing the health system. This type of cancer is the fourth most common among women. It is estimated that for each year of the 2020/2022 triennium, 16,590 new cases of CC are diagnosed in

Brazil, with an estimated risk of 15.43 cases per 100,000 women, being responsible for 311 thousand deaths per year, being the fourth most frequent cause of cancer death in women. In Brazil, in 2019, 6,596 cases of death from this neoplasm were reported. (1)

The prognosis of the disease is improved according to early diagnosis, but there are many women who do not undergo the preventive examination for several reasons, among which stand out: the lack of knowledge about the importance of the examination, cultural and religious issues, prejudice and shame of body exposure. (2)

Therefore, nurses play a fundamental role in carrying out actions in primary health care for the control and early detection of CC, such as the nursing consultation with reception

and qualified listening, through the humanization of health practices in the Unified Health System, which must be based on teamwork and on building the relationship between professionals and users, in addition to carrying out the Pap smear. (3)

Based on the theme, it is known that even though it is important to carry out the Pap smear, this issue still presents resistance in women, whether for cultural or historical reasons. As a result, it is of great importance for nurses to welcome these patients in primary health care, developing planning techniques, breaking barriers and taboos, in order to encourage adherence to the examination, facilitating early detection and treatment and improving care and quality of life for these women. Given the above, the objective was to identify, in the scientific literature, the role of nurses in the early detection of cervical cancer.

METHOD

This is an integrative literature review, following the recommendations set out in the PRISMA Statement. (4) We sought to answer the following guiding question formulated based on the PICO strategy (5): What is the nurse's role in the early detection of cervical cancer? Articles available in full, electronically, without language exclusion, published between 2010 and 2020 were included. Repeated publications and literature reviews were excluded.

The electronic search was performed from April to June 2021, in three databases: Latin American and Caribbean Literature on Health Sciences (LILACS), the Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online (MEDLINE/Pubmed) and in the Virtual Bibliographic Index on Health (SCIELO). The following descriptors were used: Cervical Neoplasms and Nursing, available in the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) of the National Library of Me-

dicine and Descriptors in Health Sciences (DeCS), in all languages, using the



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Boolean operator AND.

From the crossings carried out, 1,389 articles were found, 1,373 publi-

cations were excluded, as they did not meet the criteria adopted in this investigation. In addition, 27 duplicate publications were excluded. Finally, the sample consisted of 16 articles.

The levels of evidence were determined as follows: Level I - Evidence from a systematic review or meta-analysis of multiple randomized controlled clinical trials or from clinical guidelines, based on systematic reviews of randomized controlled clinical trials; Level II - Evidence from individual controlled and randomized studies; Level III - Evidence from experimental studies without randomization; Level IV - Evidence from cohort or case-control; Level V - Evidence from a systematic review of descriptive and qualitative studies; Level VI - Evidence from a descriptive or qualitative study; Level VII - Evidence obtained from the opinions of authorities or reports from expert committees. (6)

The results were discussed based on the scientific literature on the subject, respecting the integrity of the articles and copyright, with no modification of the content found for the benefit of this research.

RESULTS

The 16 articles that were analyzed and structured according to the proposed characteristics are shown in Table - 1 below.

With regard to the results, the following findings were found: health education focusing on early detection of cervical cancer and encouraging the performance of the Pap smear; nursing guidance on the importance of condom use in sexual relations; nursing consultation, completion of the cytopathological examination; vaccination against HPV; early diagnosis and treatment.

DISCUSSION

Based on this research, nurses' ac-

tions in the early detection of cervical cancer were described. The analysis of the levels of evidence showed a predominance of level VI, that is, evidence from descriptive or qualitative studies. (6)

The role of nurses is very relevant for the early detection of CC. In this sense, its attributions are: to promote control of risk factors for this infection; expand the number of women who regularly undergo Pap smears; ensure that women with normal results are screened at regular intervals and that those with abnormal results are given prompt action and appropriate treatment. (23)

In health education, nurses must use their proximity to the population, a powerful tool to encourage women's adherence to nursing consultations, and through this, clarify doubts, favoring behavioral changes in patients. (24) One study showed that nursing develops health actions that focus on creating spaces for information, reflection on the body, sexuality and self-care. (25)

Among other actions, there is the prevention of risk factors, in addition to guidance and clarification on legends and taboos that are usually found in the female population, highlighting the advantages of early detection of CC. (26)

Another important action of nurses in primary care refers to encouraging the use of condoms in sexual relations as an ally to reduce cervical cancer. Although the use of condoms partially protects, since the infection of HPV can also occur through contact with the skin of the vulva, perineal region, perianal region and scrotum, it is up to the nurse to encourage adherence to this contraceptive method, as it can also prevent other STIs. (1)

The health education activity can either occur in environments that cover a greater number of people, or it can be individualized, such as in nursing consultations. Thus, it is up to the nurse to provide individualized, humanized,

Table 1 - Characterization of the studies according to the journal, year, country, type of study, outcome of the Nurse's role in the early detection of cervical cancer. Fortaleza/CE, 2021.

| Author/ Year | Country where it was developed | Study Type | Outcome | Level of Evidence |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|--|-------------------|
| Pierre et al. (2020) (7) | Brazzaville | Cross-sectional | Health education Cytopathological examination | VI |
| Hirutetal et al. (2018) (8) | Ethiopia | Case- Control | Health education Cytopathological examination | IV |
| Saei Ghare et al. (2018) (9) | Iran | Cross-sectional | Health education | VI |
| Gonul et al. (2019) (10) | Turkey | Cross-sectional | Cytopathological examination Early diagnosis and treatment of CC | VI |
| Simona et al. (2018) (11) | Senegal | Cross-sectional | Health education Early treatment of CC Cytopathological examination | VI |
| David et al. (2018) (12) | U.S.A. | Case-Control | Cytopathological examination HPV vaccination | IV |
| Caroline et al. (2019) (13) | South Africa | Cross-sectional | Cytopathological examination Health education Encouraging condom use | VI |
| Maeda et al. (2013) (14) | Brazil | Cross-sectional | Cytopathological examination | VI |
| Ester et al. (2019) (15) | Brazil | Cross-sectional | Cytopathological examination Health education Gynecological consultation | VI |
| Carvalho et al. (2018) (16) | Brazil | Cross-sectional | HPV vaccination Cytopathological examination | VI |
| Chiconela et al. (2017) (17) | Brazil | Cross-sectional | Cytopathological examination | VI |
| Almeida et al. (2015) (18) | Brazil | Cross-sectional | Health education | VI |
| Fernandes et al. (2016) (19) | Brazil | Cross-sectional | Health education | VI |
| Mcnamara et al. (2016) (20) | America | Cross-sectional | HPV vaccination Health education | VI |
| Anthonia et al. (2019) (21) | Africa | Cross-sectional | Nursing consultation Health education | VI |
| Mengesha et al. (2020) (22) | Ethiopia | Cross-sectional | Encouraging condom use | VI |

Source: Researchers' data (2021)

complete and orderly care. (27)

Another area covered by nursing care is vaccination, which plays an important role in preventing HPV infection. The vaccine provides protection

against several subtypes of HPV, including low-risk subtypes 6 and 11, which cause 90% of genital warts, and subtypes 16 and 18, which cause 70% of high-risk cervical cancers. (20)

One of the main functions of the nurse in the prevention of CC is the gynecological consultation with the accomplishment of the cytopathological exam. The most important thing is not only the ability to collect material for examinations, but the interpretation of the result, the active search for these women with alterations, the necessary referrals and the monitoring and follow-up of suspected or confirmed cases of CCU. (28)

However, in order to achieve good results, teamwork is necessary, consisting of a way of organizing practices for

an expanded approach to the individual's health needs. For this, the quality of healthcare, safety and satisfaction of patients and professionals is essential. (29)

CONCLUSION

In the end, it was found that the data analyzed in this research met the proposed objective, evidencing the performance of professional nurses in coping with CCU. Several forms of nursing work were identified, such as: health education, encouraging condom

use, performing the Pap smear and vaccination, highlighting, in most articles, the prevalence of health education.

It is noteworthy that the studies showed that the nurse's attributions are very important in the entire CCU disease process, from the prevention and during the treatment of the disease. Thus, research on this topic is relevant, since it can serve as a subsidy for clarifying doubts for health professionals and pointing out possibilities for effective monitoring in primary care.

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