

Cervical Cancer ACTION

Coalition to STOP Cervical Cancer

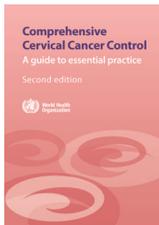


Governing Council



ISSUE BRIEF

Implementing New WHO Cervical Cancer Program Guidance in Your Country



In December 2014 the World Health Organization (WHO) launched an updated edition of its popular 2006 publication “Comprehensive Cervical Cancer Control: A Guide to Essential Practice.” Also known as the “Pink Book,” the new, 364-page volume explains recent technical and strategic developments for improving access to cervical cancer prevention and control services, and it identifies key opportunities throughout a woman’s life when interventions can be put into action. The guide is available as a free download—see the Resources section at the end of this paper. French and Spanish versions of the book will be produced in 2015.

Tailoring strategies for specific situations

The published guidelines are global in nature and discuss a variety of cervical cancer prevention interventions that can be implemented in countries. Some of the tools are more appropriate than others for low-resource countries, so effective use of the guidelines should be tailored to specific national, and sub-national, needs and capabilities. This requires a thoughtful process of analyzing the local situation and selecting relevant solutions, using local evidence whenever possible.

To strengthen health programs and to determine which strategies make the most sense in your country, it is a good idea to involve a variety of stakeholder groups in the decision-making process, including relevant ministry of health staff, private providers such as those in nongovernmental organization clinics, professional societies, women’s groups, cancer and reproductive health advocates, and others. And even though many interventions may be introduced as pilots and in limited geographic areas, scale-up and sustainability should be planned from the beginning. You may wish to review the WHO strategic approach document listed in Resources.

A six-step introduction process

The excellent WHO publication “Introducing WHO’s sexual and reproductive health guidelines and tools into national programmes: Principles and processes of adaptation and implementation” offers a wealth of practical information and is well-worth consulting (the download link is listed among the resources). The following text is a summary of those recommendations, adapted for programs focusing on cervical cancer.

STEP 1 Plan and advocate

- a) Determine which cervical cancer prevention and cancer treatment interventions are most feasible for the nation at this point in time—where will you begin? What are your specific program objectives?
- b) Consider how a comprehensive program (including vaccination, screening, and improving cancer treatment facilities) can be implemented and over what period of time.
- c) Investigate whether any groups within the country currently have cervical cancer prevention and treatment plans. If yes, what is the status of implementation?
- d) Advocate for cervical cancer interventions with decision-makers and donor agencies; generate budgetary support.
- e) Secure the involvement and support of various stakeholder groups (cancer organizations, women’s groups, reproductive health groups, professional organizations such as OB/GYN associations, etc.).

STEP 2 Analyze the situation

- a) Review current policies and national guidelines related to your chosen interventions. For example, are the recommended interventions effective and do they have a good coverage? Who is responsible for what? For example, are nurses allowed to conduct pelvic exams (assuming they have been properly trained)?
- b) Are necessary supplies available? For example, do clinics have speculums? Can they buy CO₂ for cryotherapy equipment?
- c) Are there experts in country who could assist with skills training?
- d) If the country has not yet introduced human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, is there any possibility of introducing the vaccine in the national immunization program (NIP) in the near future? How well does the NIP perform in general? Are any vaccines currently being given to older children or young adolescents?
- e) Where do women receive reproductive health or cancer control services? Who is targeted for such services and what services are offered?
- f) Look at “Comprehensive Cervical Cancer Control: A Guide to Essential Practice” to determine the best strategies and screening and preventive treatment algorithm(s) to use in your situation(s).

STEP 3 Adapt the global guidelines for the local situation

- a) Select the strategies that are most relevant to your country situation.
- b) Develop and publish locally-relevant guidance.
- c) Use your locally-adapted guidance (or international guidance) for training programs. Explore adding the guidance to the curricula of medical and nursing colleges.

STEP 4 Design your implementation strategy

- a) Create a detailed plan of how, where, and when the new interventions will be introduced. The Cervical Cancer Action Planner (see Resources) can help.
- b) Design the monitoring and evaluation plan as well as a plan to assess the quality of the program.
- c) Be sure to include funding and staff for local advocacy, staff training, and community mobilization elements.

STEP 5 Pilot test and evaluate the program

STEP 6 Continue to advocate for support and take the program to national scale

Please consult “Introducing WHO’s sexual and reproductive health guidelines and tools into national programmes: Principles and processes of adaptation and implementation” for more information.

Resources

- 1) **Comprehensive Cervical Cancer Control: A Guide to Essential Practice** (2nd Edition—WHO)
www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/cancers/cervical-cancer-guide/en/index.html
- 2) **Introducing WHO’s sexual and reproductive health guidelines and tools into national programmes: Principles and processes of adaptation and implementation** (WHO)
www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/general/RHR_07_09/en/
- 3) **The WHO Strategic Approach to strengthening sexual and reproductive health policies and programmes**
www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/countries/strategic_approach/en/
- 4) **Cervical Cancer Action publications**
cervicalcanceraction.org/pubs/pubs.php
- 5) **CCA maps showing progress in prevention worldwide**
cervicalcanceraction.org/comments/maps.php
- 6) **Cervical Cancer Prevention Action Planner** (PATH)
www.rho.org/actionplanner.htm
- 7) **RHO Cervical Cancer Library** (PATH)
www.rho.org

Cervical Cancer Action

Cervical Cancer Action: A Global Coalition to Stop Cervical Cancer (CCA) was founded in 2007 to expedite the global availability, affordability, and accessibility of new and improved cervical cancer prevention technologies to women in developing countries.

Web: www.cervicalcanceraction.org
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