

# Knowledge and barriers towards Cervical Cancer Screening among Young Women in Malaysia

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## ABSTRACT

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<b>Introduction</b>	This study examined the level of knowledge and barriers towards cervical cancer screening of female university students.
<b>Methods</b>	Cross-sectional design was used among 287 female students at a tertiary institution located in Selangor, Malaysia. The name lists of all students in all faculties were obtained from each faculty's registrar. The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, MSU approved the study. Respondents completed the consent form before they were given the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of four sections: Socio-demographic characteristics (six questions), risk factor of cervical cancer (six questions), and knowledge about cervical cancer and Pap smear test (ten questions) and finally barriers about Pap smear (eleven questions). Data were analyzed using SPSS version 13.
<b>Results</b>	The prevalence of ever having had a Pap test was 6%. Majority of the participants had adequate knowledge about risk factors of cervical cancer. The highest knowledge about cervical cancer risk factor reported by the respondents was having more than one sex partner (77.5%), whereas the lowest was the relationship between HPV and cervical cancer (51.2%). Age, Marital status, ethnicity, monthly family income and faculty, were significantly associated with the knowledge of cervical cancer screening (p=0.003; p=0.001; p=0.002; p=0.002; p=0.001 & p=0.002; respectively). The most common barrier to cervical cancer screening was "the Pap smear test will make them worry" (95.8%). The least common barrier was "no encouragement from the partner" (8.8%).
<b>Conclusions</b>	Misconceptions and barriers to the uptake of the Pap smear test are still serious problems among young women. Although knowledge about cervical cancer screening is adequate, the actual practice of taking the Pap smear test is poor. The introduction of reproductive health subjects is warranted for all university students.