

Awareness Of Cancer Cervix In Women Living In Rural Area..

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on cervical cancer, a major health concern for women in India, especially in rural areas where many have limited knowledge and access to healthcare. It involved 100 women aged 25–45 from the rural region of Khanapur who answered a structured questionnaire. The results showed that only about one-third of these women were familiar with cervical cancer, its causes, the possibility of prevention, HPV vaccination, and screening methods like the Pap smear test. Around 69% had very little basic information. Awareness about important risk factors including early marriage, having multiple sexual partners, tobacco use, poor menstrual hygiene, and family medical history was also found to be quite low. These findings reveal a clear gap in knowledge and underscore the critical need for focused health education, community outreach, and better access to screening and vaccination services to help lower the rates of cervical cancer and related deaths in rural areas.

Methodology

A cross-sectional survey study was conducted to assess the awareness of cervical cancer among women living in the rural area of Khanapur, Sangli. A group of 100 women between the ages of 25 and 45 was chosen through simple random sampling, following specific inclusion and exclusion guidelines. The study process was clearly explained to each participant, and everyone gave their written informed consent before taking part. Data were collected through an offline, standardized questionnaire covering knowledge of cervical cancer, its risk factors, prevention, vaccination, and screening methods. Participants were instructed on how to complete the questionnaire, and responses were gathered and systematically recorded. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and percentages were calculated for each variable. Microsoft Excel was used for organizing data and generating graphical representation of findings. The study was conducted within the allotted time frame, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation.

Results

The study showed that only about 31–33% of women were aware of cervical cancer, its risk factors, HPV vaccination, and screening methods. Nearly 69% lacked basic knowledge. Most participants were married, had no major medical history, and showed very low awareness across all 10 questionnaire items.

Conclusion

Many women living in rural areas have limited knowledge about cervical cancer, including its risk factors, how to prevent it, the benefits of vaccination, and the importance of regular screening. This lack of awareness highlights a critical need for educational programs within these communities to promote early detection and help lower the impact of cervical cancer.

KEYWORDS: Cervical cancer, Awareness, Rural women, HPV vaccine, Pap smear, Risk factors, Prevention, Screening.

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INTRODUCTION

Cervical cancer is a widespread health issue affecting many women around the world, especially in developing countries like India, where it remains a significant challenge for public health.^[1] It is primarily caused by persistent infection with high-risk types of human papillomavirus (HPV)^[2]. Despite being largely preventable through vaccination and early screening, cervical cancer continues to cause high mortality due to delayed diagnosis and lack of awareness^[3].

Women in rural areas often struggle with challenges like not having easy access to healthcare, lower literacy rates, cultural traditions that limit their opportunities, and a lack of information about reproductive health.^[4] These factors significantly increase their vulnerability to cervical cancer. Many women are unaware of important preventive measures like Pap smear testing and HPV vaccination, as well as key risk factors including early marriage, multiple sexual partners, tobacco use, and poor menstrual hygiene^[5].

Raising awareness in rural communities is crucial to reducing the burden of cervical cancer. Improving knowledge about

symptoms, prevention, and early detection can help women seek timely medical care and reduce morbidity and mortality [6]. Therefore, assessing the current level of awareness among rural women is essential to guide future health-education programs and community-based interventions [7].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was a survey-based observational research conducted over a period of three months in the rural region of Khanapur, focusing on women aged 25 to 45 years. A simple random sampling method was used to recruit participants. The final sample size was determined to be 100 based on availability, feasibility, and population characteristics. The study aimed to assess the awareness levels of cervical cancer, its risk factors, preventive measures, and screening practices among rural women.

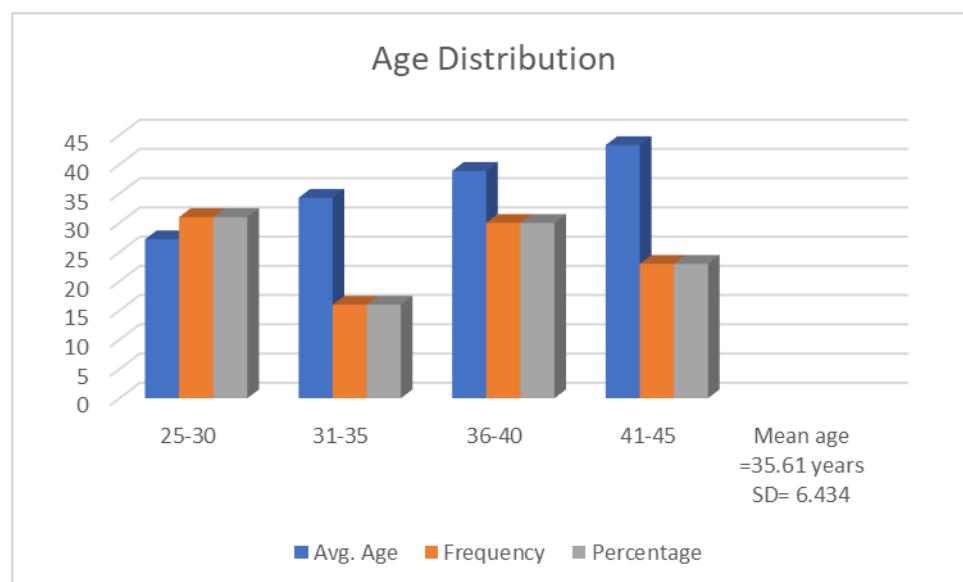
The study population included women residing in rural areas who met the inclusion criteria and provided informed consent. Participants were asked to fill out several study materials, including a structured questionnaire, a data collection form, a patient information sheet, and a consent form. These tools were designed to collect details about their demographics, their awareness of cervical cancer, what they know about HPV vaccination, screening options like the Pap smear, and their understanding of the related risk factors. Inclusion criteria ensured that participants were females aged 25–45 years and permanent residents of the rural area. Exclusion criteria ruled out women with a history of hysterectomy, mental or physical disabilities, or those unwilling to participate. The outcome measure used was a standardized questionnaire designed to assess awareness related to cervical cancer and preventive practices.

The data collection process involved explaining the study purpose to eligible participants, obtaining informed consent, distributing the questionnaires, and guiding participants on how to fill them accurately. All responses were collected in offline mode. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and percentages were calculated for each variable. Microsoft Excel was used for organizing the data and presenting the results graphically. The study aimed to identify gaps in awareness and highlight the need for community education and preventive strategies for cervical cancer among rural women.

RESULTS:

AGE-

Age groups	Avg. Age	Frequency	Percentage
25-30	27.2	31	31
31-35	34.3	16	16
36-40	38.9	30	30
41-45	43.3	23	23
Mean age =35.61 years		SD= 6.434	

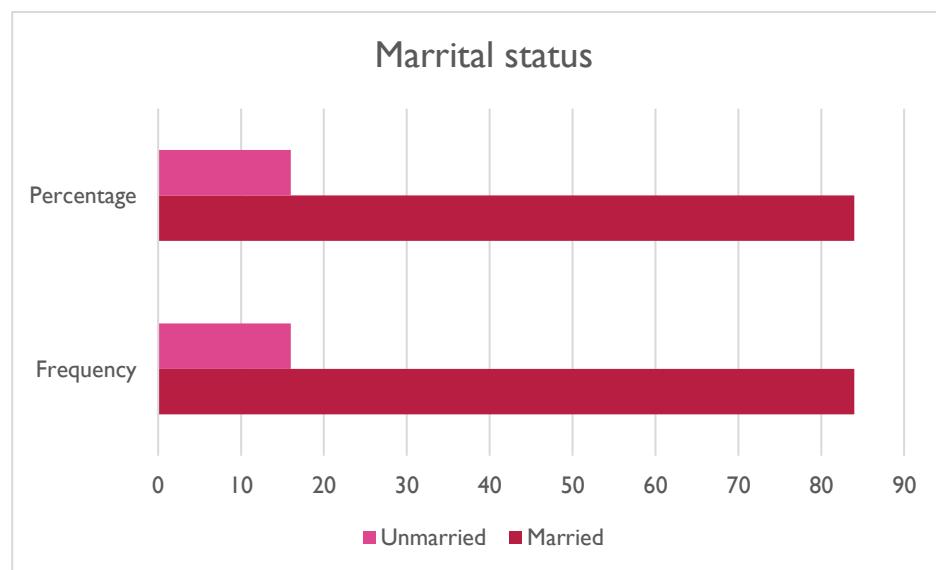


Interpretation :

Many participants fall within the 36–40 age range, accounting for 30% of the total group. This indicates that a significant portion of the individuals are in their late 30s. On the other hand, the 31–35 age group has the fewest participants, accounting for just 16%. The average age of participants is 35.61 years, which lies within the 31–35 range, slightly leaning towards the younger side of the age spectrum. The standard deviation of 6.434 indicates a moderate spread in ages, meaning most participants' ages are clustered between approximately 29 and 42 years. This reflects a relatively consistent age distribution within the group.

2. Marital status :

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	84	84
Unmarried	16	16

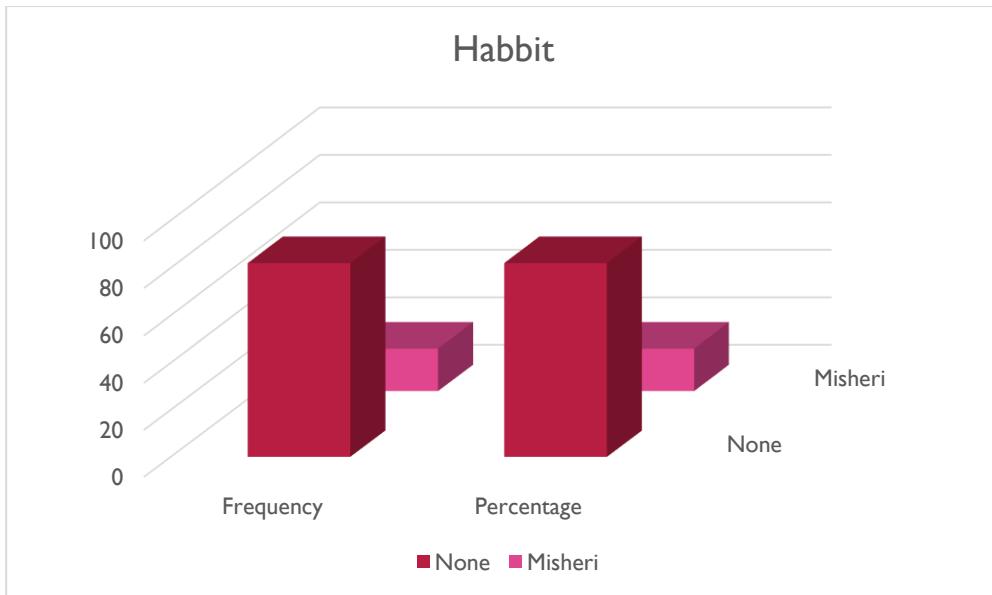


Interpretation:

Out of 100 participants in the study, 84 are married and 16 are unmarried. This means most of the people involved in the research are married.

3. Habit:

Habit	Frequency	Percentage
None	82	82
Misheri	18	18

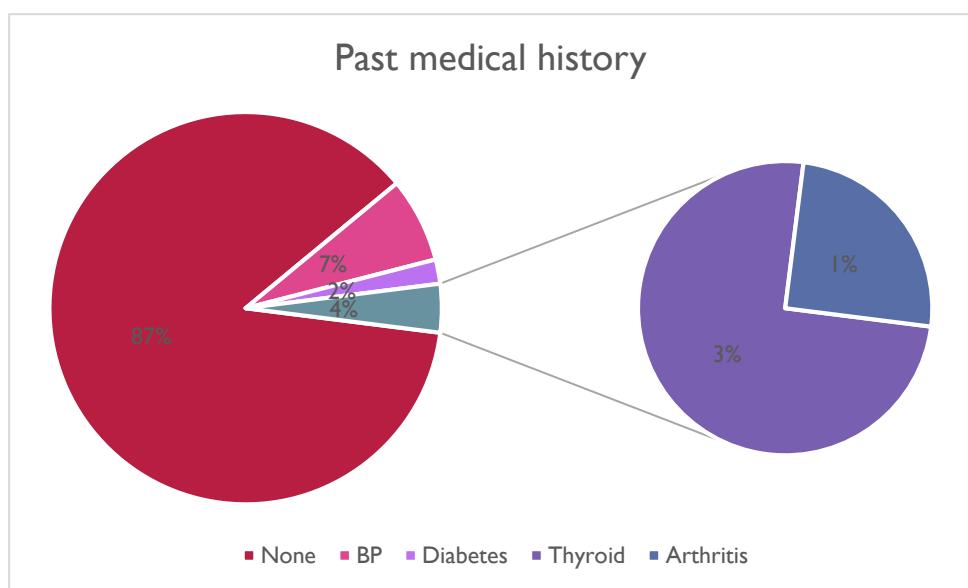


Interpretation:

Out of 100 participants, 82% reported having no habit, while 18% reported using misheri. This indicates that the majority of participants do not have any such habit, and only a small portion consumes misheri.

4. Past Medical History:

Past Med.History	Frequency	percentage
None	87	87
BP	7	7
Diabetes	2	2
Thyroid	3	3
Arthritis	1	1



Interpretation:

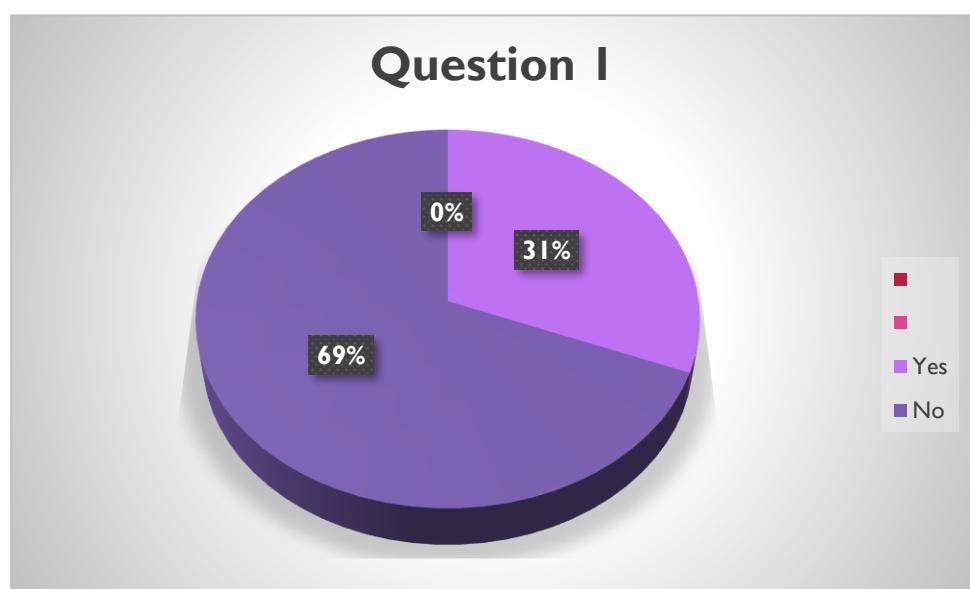
Among the 100 participants, 87% have no history of past medical conditions, while the remaining 13% report various health issues. Specifically, 7% have a history of high blood pressure (BP), 2% have diabetes, 3% have thyroid problems, and 1% have arthritis.

Most people are generally in good health, with just a small number dealing with particular long-term health issues.

5. question 1.

Q1. Do you know that cancer of cervix is the major cause of death among women in india?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	31
No	69	69



Interpretation:

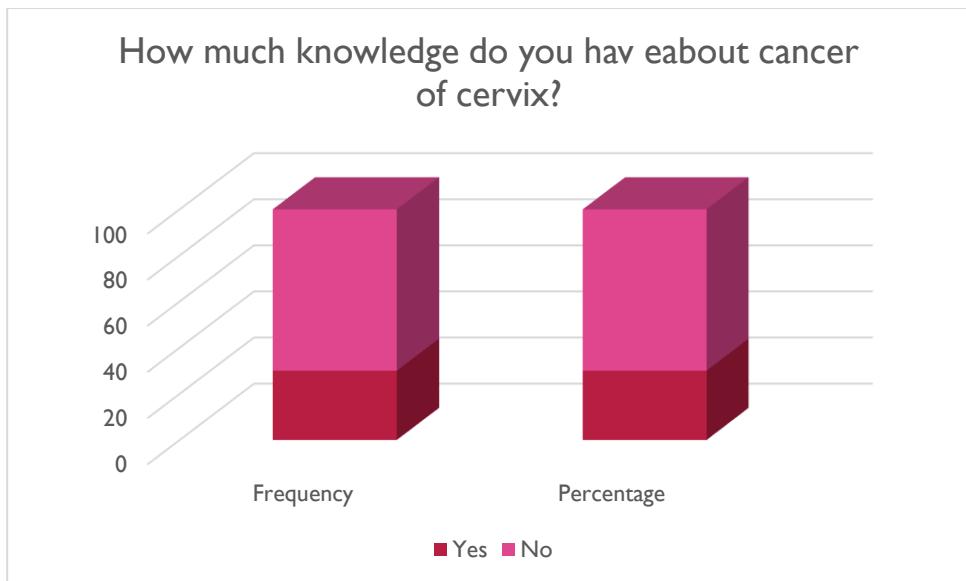
Out of 100 participants, 31% are aware that cervical cancer is a major cause of death among women in India, while 69% are not aware.

Awareness about cervical cancer appears to be very low, as most women do not fully understand how serious the disease can be.

6. question 2.

Q2- How much knowledge do you have about cancer of cervix?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	30
No	70	70



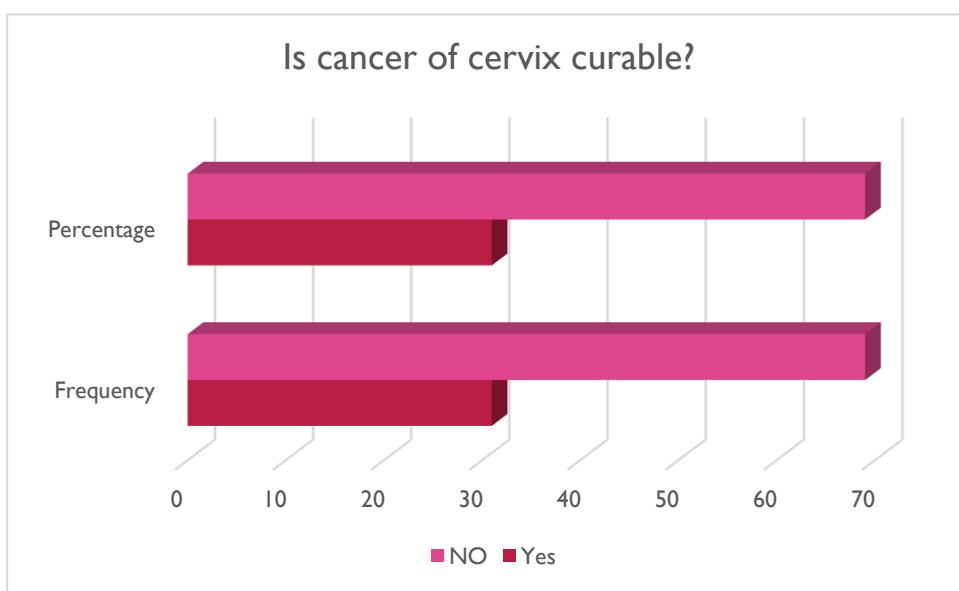
Interpretation:

Among the 100 participants, 30% reported having knowledge about cervical cancer, while 70% said they do not. This shows that most participants lack knowledge about cervical cancer, highlighting a significant gap in awareness and education regarding the disease.

7. question 3

Q3-Do you know cancer of cervix is curable?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	31
NO	69	69



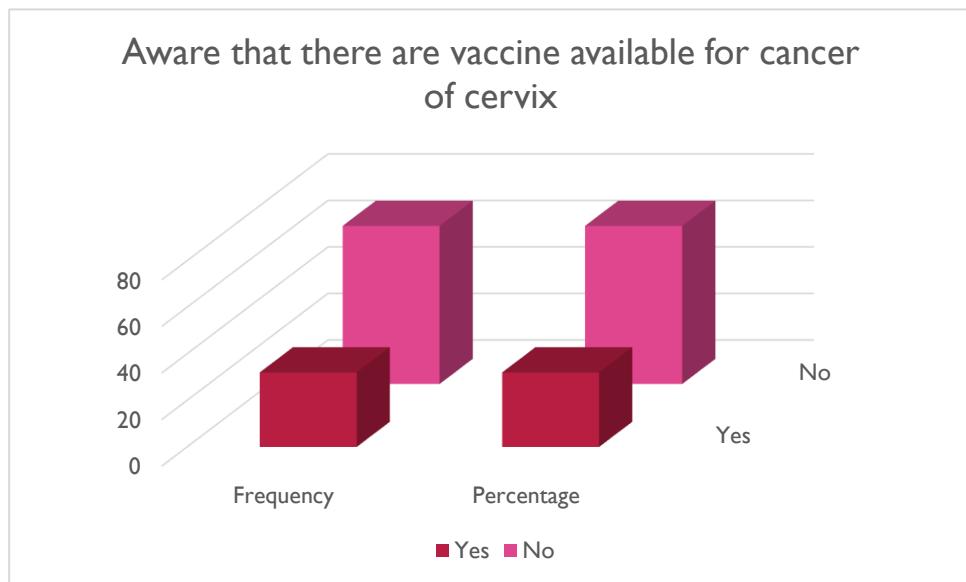
Interpretation:

Out of 100 participants, only 31% knew that cervical cancer can be cured, while the remaining 69% did not. This shows that most people are unaware that cervical cancer is treatable, highlighting the importance of improving health education

on this topic.

8. question 4

Q4- Are you aware that there are vaccines available for cancer of cervix?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	32	32
No	68	68

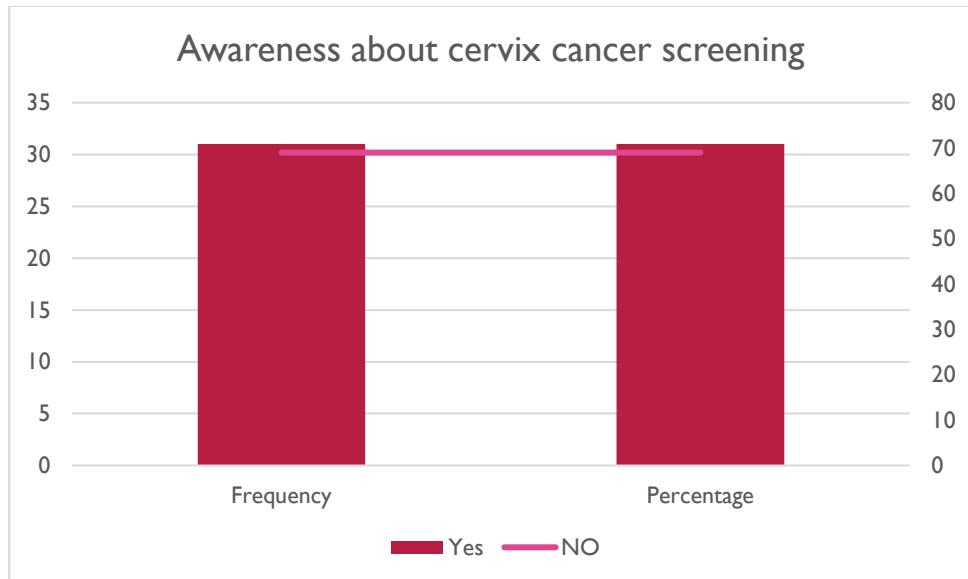


Interpretation:

Among 100 participants, 32% are aware that vaccines are available for cervical cancer, while 68% are not aware. This indicates that awareness about the cervical cancer vaccine is low, and most people are uninformed about this important preventive measure.

9. question 5

Q5- Have you heard about cancer cervix screening?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	31
NO	69	69

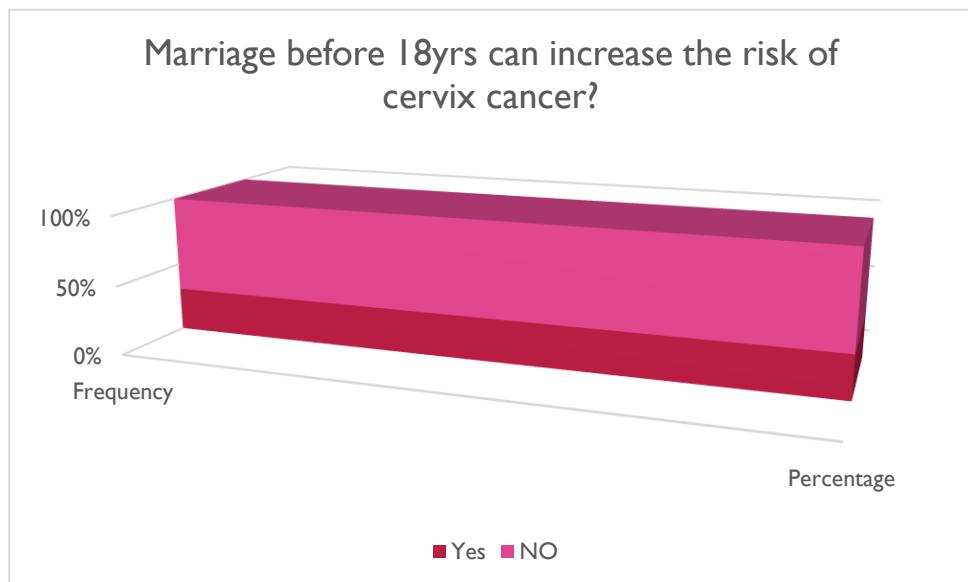


Interpretation:

Out of 100 people, 31 have heard about cervical cancer screening, while 69 have not. This means most people are not aware of the screening methods available, highlighting a gap in knowledge about early detection options.

10. question 6.

Q6- Marriage before 18 yrs can increase risk of cancer of cervix?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	31
NO	69	69

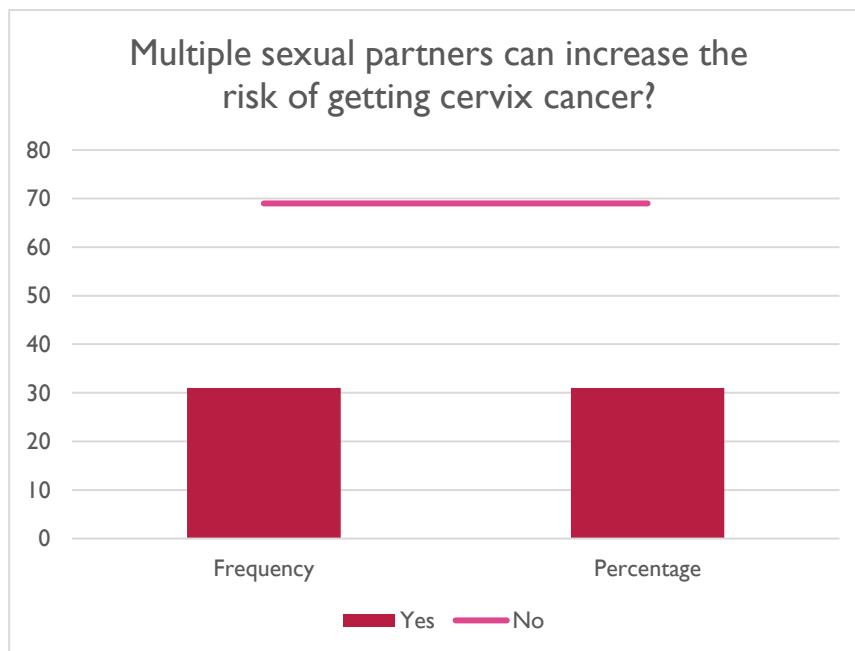


Interpretation:

Out of 100 participants, 31 are aware that getting married before turning 18 can raise the chances of developing cervical cancer, whereas 69 do not know about this risk. This indicates that most individuals lack awareness about the link between early marriage and the risk of cervical cancer, highlighting the need for better health education on this topic.

10. question 7

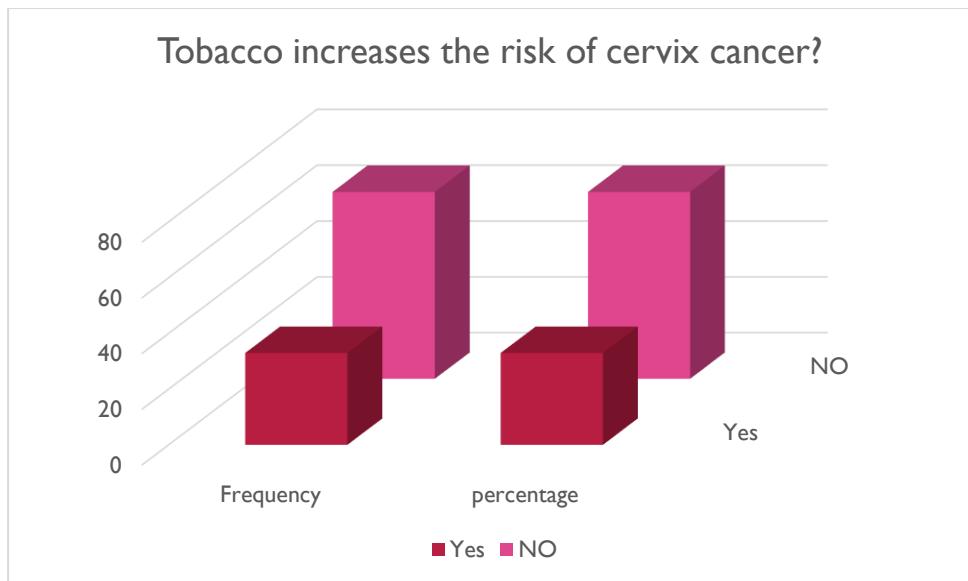
Q7- Multiple sex partners can increase the risk of cancer of cervix?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	31
No	69	69



Interpretation:

Out of 100 participants, only 31% knew that having multiple sexual partners raises the risk of cervical cancer, while 69% did not recognize this risk. This highlights that most people are not well-informed about an important factor contributing to cervical cancer, underscoring the need to improve awareness and education about sexual health. 12. question 8

Q8- Consumption of tobacco increases the risk of cervix cancer?		
	Frequency	percentage
Yes	33	33
NO	67	67



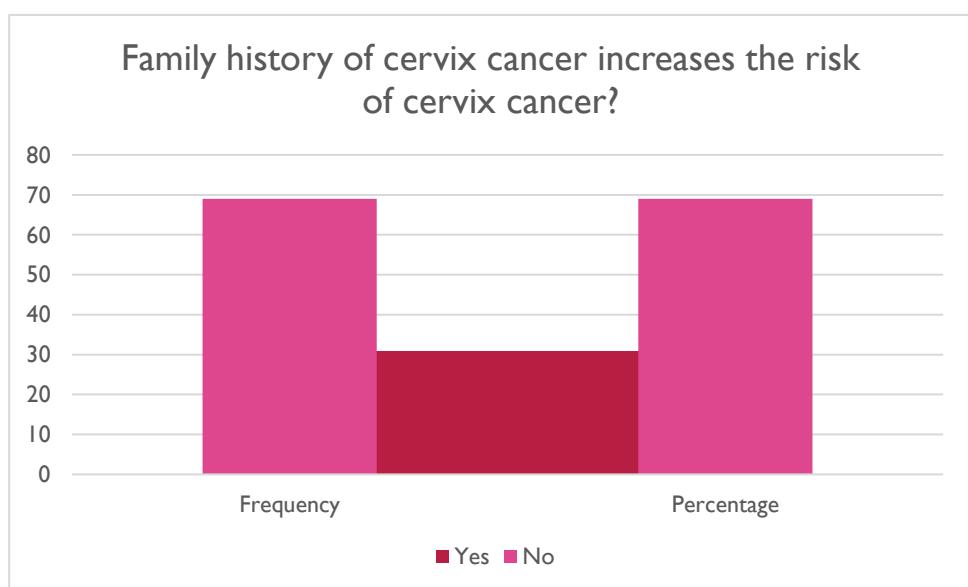
Interpretation:

Out of 100 people surveyed, only 33 are aware that using tobacco can raise the chances of developing cervical cancer, while 67 do not know this fact. This shows that a majority lack knowledge about the dangers tobacco poses in relation to cervical cancer, pointing to a clear need for improved public health awareness and education.

13. question 9.

Q9-Family history of CA can increase the risk of cervix cancer?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	31
No	69	69



Interpretation:

Out of 100 participants, just 31% know that having a family history of cancer can raise the chances of getting cervical cancer, whereas 69% do not have this knowledge.

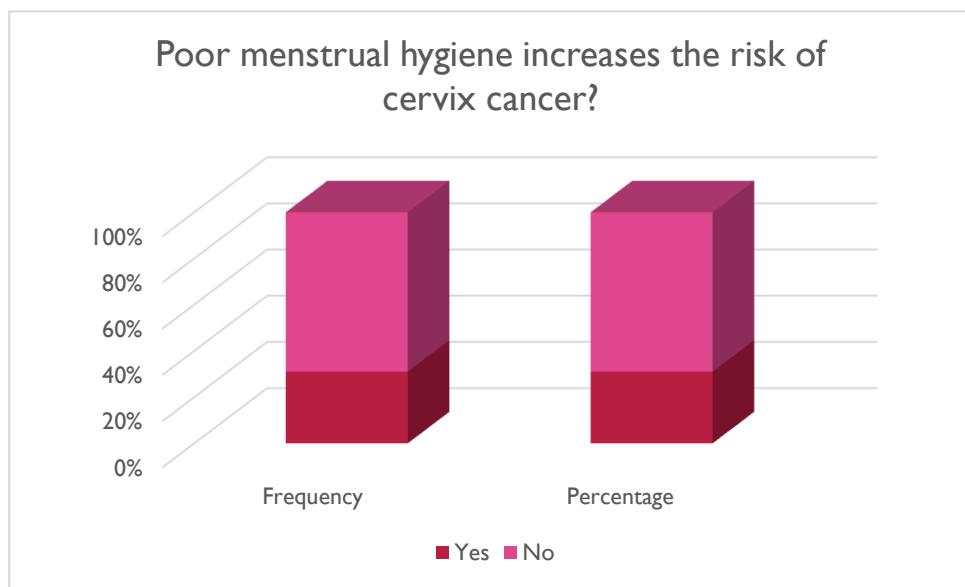
This shows that most individuals lack understanding of the genetic risk factors associated with cervical cancer, indicating

a need for improved awareness and education.

14. Question 10.

Q10- Poor menstrual hygiene can increase the risk of cancer of cervix?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	31
No	69	69



Interpretation:

Out of 100 participants, only 31 are aware that poor menstrual hygiene can raise the risk of cervical cancer, while 69 are unaware of this connection.

This indicates that a majority of individuals do not recognize the link between menstrual hygiene and cervical cancer risk, highlighting the need for better menstrual health education.

DISCUSSION

This study focused on understanding how much women in rural areas know about cervical cancer—what causes it, how to prevent it, the treatments available, and why early detection is important. Unfortunately, the results showed that a majority of these women, around 69%, had little to no knowledge about these critical aspects, while only about 31% showed some awareness. The questionnaire included ten basic questions about risk factors, vaccines, and screening methods like the Pap smear test.

Cervical cancer remains one of the leading causes of death among women in India, especially in underserved rural regions. The study's findings highlight a big knowledge gap among women in these areas. Many were unaware that lifestyle and reproductive habits—such as marrying very young, having multiple sexual partners, tobacco use, and poor menstrual hygiene—increase the risk of developing cervical cancer. This lack of awareness is often tied to cultural beliefs, limited education, and misinformation, which make rural women more vulnerable.

Moreover, most of the women did not know that cervical cancer can be prevented and treated effectively, especially if caught early. Awareness about vaccines like the HPV vaccine and screening tests that help detect cervical cancer early, such as Pap smears and HPV tests, was very low. This points to not only a shortage of general health education but also a failure in reaching rural communities with important health messages.

The study clearly shows the urgent need for educational campaigns and community programs designed specifically for rural women. These efforts should consider local culture and languages while addressing the specific challenges faced by

these communities.

Additionally, empowering local healthcare workers—like Anganwadi workers and staff at primary health centers—is crucial. They can be instrumental in teaching women about the importance of screenings, the benefits of HPV vaccination, and recognizing symptoms that require prompt medical attention.

In summary, this research reveals a wide gap in knowledge about cervical cancer among rural women, emphasizing the critical need for educational initiatives. Only by addressing these shortcomings with focused and culturally appropriate strategies can we hope to lower cervical cancer rates and save lives in India's rural populations.

Conclusion:

The data shows that only about 31% of participants are aware of various facts related to cervical cancer, while approximately 69% are unaware.

This indicates a significant gap in awareness and education regarding cervical cancer, its risk factors, prevention (vaccines and screening), and treatability.

There is a definite need for programs that educate people about health to help increase their understanding and awareness.

QUESTIONNAIRE

A STUDY OF AWARENESS OF CANCER CERVIX IN WOMEN LIVING IN RURAL AREA.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA:

Name :

Age:

Occupation:

Education:

Marital status:

Habit:

Height:

Weight:

Previous medical illness:

Questions:

Do you know that cancer of cervix is the major cause of death among women in India?

Yes

No

How much knowledge do you have about cancer of cervix?

Adequate Knowledge

Not Adequate Knowledge

Do you know that cancer cervix is curable?

Yes

No

Are you aware that there are vaccines available for cancer of cervix?

Yes

No

Have you heard about cancer cervix screening (pap smear)?

Yes

No

Do you know that Marriage before age of 18 years can increase the risk of getting cervical cancer?

Yes

No

Do you know that having multiple sexual partners can increase the risk of getting cervical cancer?

Yes

No

Do you know that consumption of tobacco can increase the risk of getting cervical cancer?

Yes

No

Do you know that family history of cervical cancer can increase the risk of getting cervical cancer?

Yes

No

Do you know that poor menstrual hygiene can increase the risk of getting cervical cancer?

Yes

No.

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