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# WHAT DO LEBANESE WOMEN KNOW ABOUT CERVICAL CANCER AND HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS? A REPORT ON AWARENESS LEVELS IN URBAN COMMUNITIES

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**Objectives:** To evaluate the knowledge of adult urban Lebanese women regarding cervical cancer (CC), its symptoms and risk factors and *Human Papillomavirus* (HPV) infection, its diagnostic tests and vaccination. To measure the uptake of the CC screening test (Pap smear) and the uptake of HPV vaccination and to determine the influencing factors.

**Methods:** 444 women aged  $\geq 18$  years previously healthy fill out a 32 item questionnaire about CC and HPV. Data was analyzed in SPSS® v. 21.0.

**Results:** 45.7% aged 18 to 25, were Christian (50.7%), single (49.3%), with high education (73.9%) and currently employed (49.1%) in a field not related to health (84.9%). They did not visit a general physician (64%) or a gynecologist (64.6%) regularly. 85.6% were aware of CC. HPV involvement in the pathogenesis of CC was correctly identified in 53.9%. 35.6% were aware of HPV infection but 80.4% believed they lack information. 37.6% had a Pap smear at least once whereas 9% did not know what a Pap smear was. Screening and regular visits to a physician were significantly associated with CC awareness. Only 11.7% aged 18 to 35 were vaccinated against HPV. Vaccination uptake was significantly associated with CC awareness, religion, field of work and studies, and regular visits to gynecologists.

**Conclusion:** Urban Lebanese women are not well informed in regards to CC and HPV. Screening by Pap smear and HPV vaccination uptakes are non-satisfactory. Further interventions are required in order to improve these numbers.

## Biography

Jacques Choucair is an Infectious Diseases Specialist in Hotel Dieu de France in Beyrouth. He did 2 years Fellowship at Bichat Claude Bernard hospital, University of Paris VII faculty of Medicine and Bacteriology at Broussais Hospital affiliated to University of Paris V, Faculty of Pharmacy. He has a Medical Teaching Diploma from the University of Montreal and published more than 30 articles and is a Reviewer in national and international journals. He is a Member the Lebanese Society of Infectious Diseases, a Member of the Arab association for the proper use of antibiotics, Member of ECMID and the ICID.

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