

Cervical cancer screening knowledge and barrier among women with Chinese Background

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1. Introduction

“Cervical cancer screening knowledge and barrier among women with Chinese Background” is a part of CPAR project, which is led by Scottish Community Development Centre on behalf of Health Education England and Public Health England (South-East).

CPAR stands for Community Participatory Action Research which is a community-led approach to tackle health issues that involves people coming together to work out what the problems are, getting organized and taking action on health issues of concern to them.

As a community researcher of Sussex Interpreting Service, I was honored to join this research project. The reason to choose this topic was first, it was the only cancer screening offered regularly to every woman in the UK; second, while I received this task, one of our community members was unfortunately diagnosed cervical cancer. I believe that sharing knowledge and exploring barriers would make some positive changes in Chinese community.

2. The research proposal

The initial purpose was to assess knowledge and to find out barriers which prevented women with Chinese background from conducting a smear test as well as to raise awareness of cancer screening.

Early screening for the cancer has been shown to be the most effective measure against the disease. Studies conducted elsewhere have reported that the lack of knowledge and awareness towards cancer screening affects general health and well-being.

Understanding barriers in cervical cancer screening is also important in terms of providing high-quality NHS service to women with different background.

3. Research process and methods

This study was conducted in the city of Brighton and Hove in Southeast England. A qualitative method used here was in-depth individual interview via both face to face and video phone. A total of 12 women aged 25-49 years participated in the study among whom are new migrants, second generation migrants and refugees with Chinese

background originally come from Hong Kong, Taiwan and China mainland. Women's knowledge and attitudes towards cervical cancer screening were assessed. Meanwhile different types of barriers were discussed. 6/12 have good English level while another half prefer Mandarin Chinese in the interview.

4. Research findings

The study includes five parts:

Knowledge and attitude

Systemic barriers

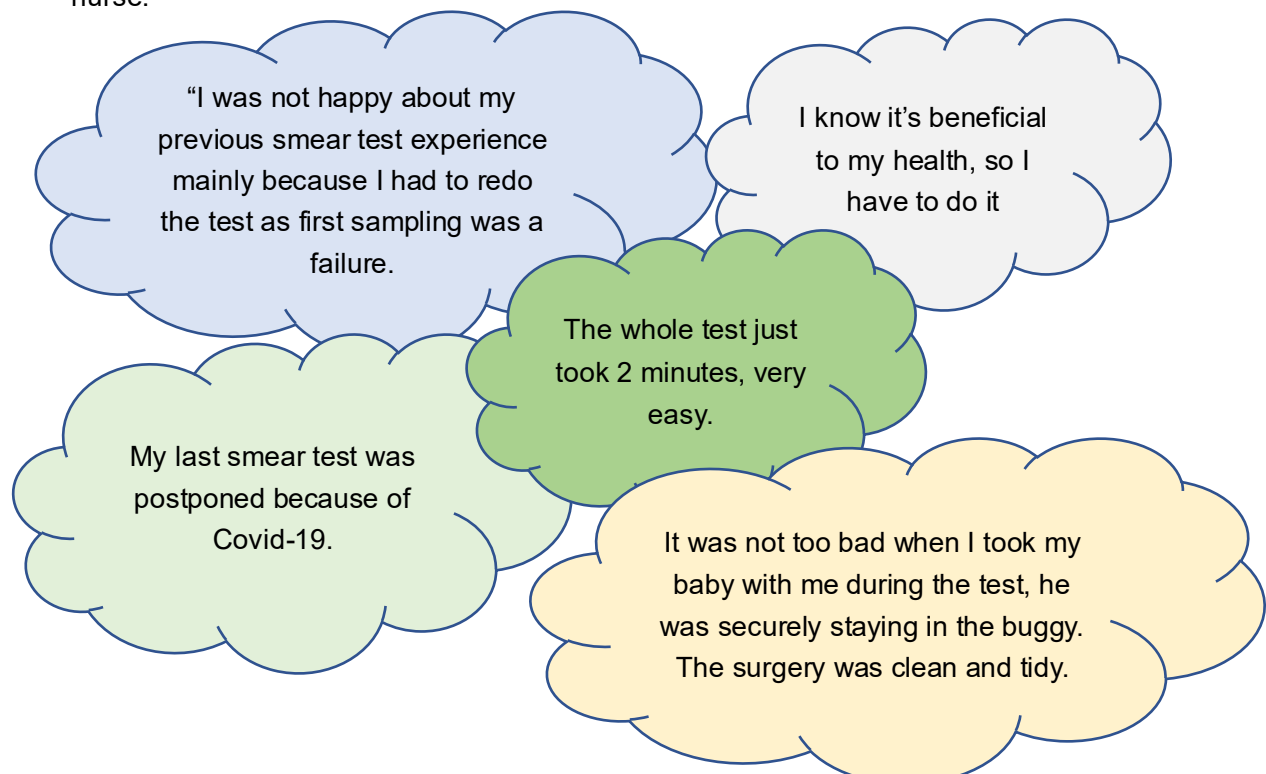
Lifestyle barriers

Culture barriers

Conclusion

Looking into the answers from 12 participants, conclusions are as follow:

All (12/12) of the respondents had heard about cervical cancer screening (smear test), the majority, (7/12) looked for information on NHS website, (4/12) receive information from health facilities. Few women (2/12) feel a bit embarrassed to have a smear test. Most women (8/12) knew the frequency of the test and (9/12) at least named one symptom or sign of the disease. Some (4/12) of respondents complained they didn't receive invitations from their GP, however only (1/12) contacted the GP. A few (3/12) women missed smear test because of COVID 19. Nearly all (11/12) of them get support from their family members. Half (6/12) of respondents had interpreter with them before but they can attend the appointment without interpreter now. All (12/12) found it easy to access the service, which usually took place in GP surgery. All (12/12) participants prefer female nurses to do the test, while very few women (1/12) felt it was fine to have a male nurse.



5. Key findings

New migrants and refugees had their first smear test in the UK which was not a free test for all in mainland China, however Taiwan and Hong Kong have very similar system as the UK, while Taiwan provides free test for women over 30y and over 25y in Hong Kong.

I found that lacking of Knowledge is also a barrier to early screening. Women with good education background and English level seem to obtain more knowledge on general healthcare, which means they have the ability to source information in various ways.

6. Actions

- ✧ Cooperate with local community organizations such as Chinese Society Brighton & Hove/CEDP Chinese Centre to organize health promotion event in Brighton and Hove area.
Purpose: To share information/ knowledge on cancer screening/ cancer symptoms
To raise awareness of cancer screening
Promote healthy life style
Encourage the community to participate in different well-being activities
- ✧ Draw attention to NHS using various methods, e.g., text messages, letters, emails and phone calls to send out appointment reminders on time.
- ✧ NHS could provide digital leaflet about cervical cancer screening to share with different community groups on social media.

7 Acknowledgements

The CPAR programme was initiated and funded by Health Education England South East and developed in collaboration with the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (previously PHE), the Scottish Community Development Centre and NHE England and Improvement.

• Appendices

Timeline

Stage 1

Pre-training information 7th April 2021

Stage 2

Building Knowledge 21st & 28th April 2021 (two training sessions)

Stage 3

Proposal and method May-Dec 2021 (group training sessions/ 1-2-1 support sessions)

Stage 4

Interviews and analysis Dec 2021-Jan2022

Stage 5

Case studies and final work submission Jan-Feb 2022

Interview questions are as follow:

- Part one - Knowledge and attitude

Q1 - Tell me people's general view towards cervical cancer screening in your community? And yourself?

Q2 - Can you tell me what you know about cervical cancer screening and what it is?

Q3 - Are you aware of the symptoms of cervical cancer? Can you name the symptoms? Where would you go to find this information?

Q4- Can you tell me when you attended the first smear test? Roughly what age?

Q5- Do you know how often do you have a smear test? Do you set up reminder yourself?

Q6- Have you ever skipped a smear test when it was due? Why?

- Part two - Systemic barriers

Q1 - Have you ever attended a cervical screening which normally called a smear test in the last 5 years?

Yes – what was your experience like?

Q2 - Do you think there are any barriers when accessing cervical cancer screening? If so, can you give us any examples?

Q3- Do you need an interpreter with you when you attend a smear test?

Q4– Do you think COVID has had an impact on accessing a smear test? How?

- Part three - Lifestyle barriers

Q1 - Are you registered with a GP surgery? If not, why not?

Q2 - Have you got a smear test reminder from your GP/NHS? Has any health professional mentioned cervical cancer screening to you before? What can you do if you don't receive invitation when it's due?

Q 3- How does the time of appointments affect your ability to access a smear test? For example, out of working time/childcare commitments etc.?

Q4- How does transportation affect your ability to access a smear test appointment, for example are family members able to take you or are you able to get public transport and is it affordable for you/is there a bus stop nearby to where you live?

- Part four - Cultural barriers

Q1 -How does the gender or ethnicity of the GP or nurse undertaking the screening matter to you? How important is it or how important do you think these things are for your community?

Q2 - Do you feel comfortable when taking a smear test?

Q3 -Do you talking about cervical screening with your friends?

Q4- Do your partner/family members support for a smear test?

- Part five - Conclusion

Q1 - What would make you feel more comfortable to talk about cancer symptoms?

Q2 - Is there anything that can be done to improve the accessibility to a smear test or to overcome the barriers that we spoke about earlier? Do you have any suggestions?