CERVICAL CANCER PREVENTION
Community Education
Flip Chart
Acknowledgments

- PATH
- MINISTRY OF HEALTH, UGANDA, NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCD) DEPARTMENT
- MINISTRY OF HEALTH, UGANDA, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH DIVISION
- MINISTRY OF HEALTH, UGANDA, HEALTH PROMOTION AND EDUCATION DIVISION.
Purpose of this flip chart

This flip chart is for sensitizing women 30-50 years of age to the problem of cervical cancer, how it can be prevented, and where they can go for screening with visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA)
What have you heard about cervical cancer?
What have you heard about cervical cancer?

Ask participants to brainstorm in small groups and briefly share responses to the following topics:

- What have you heard about cervical cancer?
- Who gets cervical cancer? At what age?
- What causes it?
- Do you know anyone who has had this disease?
- Can it be prevented?

[In response to participant answers, facilitator can make connections between participant’s background understanding and the topics that will be covered in the rest of the session.]
What is **cervical cancer** and where is the cervix?

- It is one of the most common causes of death from cancer for Ugandan women.
- Cervical cancer is a disease in which cells in the cervix grow out of control.
- The cervix is located in the lowest part of uterus and is sometimes called the mouth of the womb.
Cervix and Cervical Cancer

- Fallopian Tubes
- Ovaries
- Uterus
- Cervix
- Vagina
Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is the main cause of cervical cancer

The main cause of cervical cancer is an attack by a virus called Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).

HPV is a virus that is transmitted from one person to the other through sexual contact.

Men can get infected with HPV but do not develop cervical cancer because they do not have the cervix.

- However, men can transmit the virus to their partners through sexual intercourse.
- Men can also develop other cancers caused by HPV.
Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is the main cause of cervical cancer.
Bubble Exercise: Demonstration or Explanation of normal cell cycle and uncontrolled cancer growth

Facilitator conducts the following exercise to help illustrate how cancer causes cells to grow out of control:

Mix liquid soap into a glass of water
Using the soapy water and a drinking straw, blow individual bubbles allowing them to grow, fly a moment and then burst.

The bubble signifies the normal cycle of a cell: a normal cell grows, matures, dies and is eliminated by the body. The process continues as new cells are born.

Add dark dye or coffee into the glass of water and soap and blow slowly through the drinking straw until many bubbles build up and overflow from the glass.

Imagine that the dark dye is damaging the cells and that now they are not eliminated by the body, but remain and grow uncontrollably—this is what happens in the case of cancerous cells.
Demonstration

normal cell cycle
uncontrolled cancer growth
Who gets HPV infection and cervical cancer?

- All women and men who are sexually active are at risk of HPV infection.
- All women who have ever experienced sexual intercourse are at risk for cervical cancer.
- It is healthy and very important for a woman in her 30’s and 40’s to get a check up every three years to prevent cervical cancer.
Who gets HPV infection and cervical cancer?
How cervical cancer develops and how you can prevent it

- The HPV infection leads to precancerous changes.
- If untreated, precancerous changes become cervical cancer.
- Cervical cancer spreads very slowly and the woman does not feel anything when it starts.
- There is no pain or bleeding with precancerous changes.
- Very advanced cervical cancer can include pain in the lower abdomen and the back, bleeding from wounds on the cervix, and foul smelling discharge.

**Cervical cancer can be prevented**

- Vaccinate girls prior to sexual debut (before they are infected by HPV)
  - Screening is appropriate for women who have already been exposed to the HPV virus, however girls can also be protected from cervical cancer.
  - There is a cervical cancer vaccine for girls who have not yet been sexually exposed (the HPV vaccine). This vaccine requires 3 injections over a period of 6 months.
- Screening and early treatment of precancerous disease can prevent advanced cervical cancer in women who have been exposed to HPV.
How **cervical cancer** develops and how you can prevent it?

- Vaccinate girls to prevent infection
- Screen and treat women to prevent cervical cancer

Normal cervix → HPV infection → Precancerous changes → Cancer

- Clearance
- Regression
Common misconceptions about cervical cancer

The facilitator explains that they will be reading a series of statements.
- If the participants agree with the statement, they should move to one side of the room.
- If they disagree, they should move to the other side of the room.

The facilitator asks/reads the following statements:
- Promiscuity (“obushambani”) is a cause of cervical cancer [false—all women who have ever had sexual contact are at risk of cervical cancer]
- Women who do not shave their pubic hair or keep it clean will develop cervical cancer [false—while hygiene is beneficial for women’s health, cervical cancer develops because of an infection with a virus]
- Covering food with black/white polythene paper can cause cervical cancer [false—cervical cancer is caused by a virus and all women are at risk]
- Men can transmit the virus that causes cervical cancer to their sexual partner through intercourse. [true—although men cannot develop cervical cancer since they do not have a cervix, they can pass the virus to their sexual partners]
- Using condoms during sexual intercourse causes cervical cancer [false—cervical cancer is caused by an infection with a virus, not by the use of condoms]
- Cervical cancer can be caused by witchcraft [false—cervical cancer is caused by an infection with a virus]
- HIV and HPV are the same [false—HIV and HPV are two different viruses and are identified and treated differently. HIV is the human immunodeficiency virus and is the cause of AIDS while HPV is the human papillomavirus and is the cause of cervical cancer]
Common misconceptions about cervical cancer
You can prevent **cervical cancer** with screening

- We cannot tell from the way the woman looks whether the mouth of the womb is healthy or not.
- It is like the maize, which can look healthy from the outside.
- We cannot tell that the maize has some bad spots until the husks are removed.
- In the same way, we cannot tell whether the mouth of the womb is starting to change from looking at the woman from the outside.
- We need to use a speculum to look directly at the woman’s cervix.
- She can look healthy, but inside, the mouth of the womb is starting to change and the lesions are developing.
- These are called precancerous changes.
You can prevent **cervical cancer** with screening.
What are the cervical cancer screening options?

- A health worker can tell whether the mouth of the womb is healthy with screening. Screening can be done with VIA or Pap smear.

- Visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA)
  - One method of screening for precancerous changes is called visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA).
  - VIA is a way of looking at the cervix using a special “vinegar test” to look for precancerous changes.

- Pap smear
  Pap smear is another method of screening for pre-cancerous changes on the cervix by taking cells from the cervix and looking at them later using a microscope.

- All women between the ages of 25 and 49 years or older and are not pregnant, even those who have no sign of abnormality, should be screened.

The facilitator should ask participants if anyone has had a gynecologic exam and can describe what this involves and how they felt during the exam.

After that the facilitator should briefly review that the woman will lie down, raise her legs and a trained professional will provide the screening.
What are the cervical cancer screening options?
Treatment is available for precancerous conditions

- If there are some changes on the surface of the cervix, this means that you might have precancerous changes that need treatment.

- Sometimes a freezing treatment (cryotherapy) can be given immediately. Otherwise a woman will be referred to the referral level health facility.

- Cryotherapy treatment for precancerous changes is a simple procedure.
  - A woman can return to her normal activities the same day.
  - The uterus is not removed and the cervix is not damaged by cryotherapy.
  - This treatment allows a woman to have children in the future, if she chooses.
Treatment is available for precancerous conditions
Where can you go for screening?

In Uganda, you can get tested for cervical cancer from the following health facilities:

- Mengo Hospital in Kampala District
- Nsambya Hospital in Kampala District
- Kawempe Health Centre IV in Kampala
- Nkurumah Road KCC Clinic in Kampala
- Mulago Hospital in Kampala
- Masaka Hospital in Masaka District
- Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital in Mbarara District
- Itojo Hospital in Ntungamo District
- Ibanda Hospital in Ibanda District
- Kisoro Hospital in Kisoro District
- Mbale Regional Referral Hospital in Mbale District
- Soroti Regional Referral Hospital in Soroti District
- Nakasongola Health Centre IV in Nakasongola District
- Arua Regional Referral Hospital in Arua District
- Gulu Regional Referral Hospital in Gulu District

NOTE: These are sites as of 2010, inform participants of additional sites as they come up.
Where can you go for screening?
Conclusions

Facilitator runs a participatory exercise to review key messages covered during the session.

- This could be a game where participants choose “prizes”—pieces of paper with either a question that relates to the session or asks them to sing a song, recite a poem, or do a dance.

Facilitator asks participants what they are going to commit to based on what they learned during the session.

- Women may choose to commit to seeking screening and telling at least one other woman about cervical cancer prevention.

- If men are part of the session, they may commit to supporting women 25-50 years of age in their lives to seek cervical cancer screening.