

ABSTRACT

In sub-Saharan Africa, 34.8 new cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed per 100,000 women annually and 22.5/100,000 women die from the disease. The disease burden is higher in the developing countries with lower screening rates. Despite of the magnitude of this problem, Kenya still has a screening rate of 3.2% therefore cervical cancer prevalence has not been established. Having been shown to be effective with other health indicators and being members of the communities, community health volunteers (CHVs) can be effective in public education through community strategy approach if they have the right information; however, information on their knowledge about cervical cancer was lacking. The main objective of this study was to determine the knowledge on cervical cancer amongst CHVs in Kadibo Division, Kisumu County. Specific objectives were; to determine knowledge on the risk factors associated with cervical cancer; to determine knowledge on the signs and symptoms of cervical cancer, to determine knowledge on the availability of cervical cancer screening services at the health facilities and to determine the socio-demographic factors affecting knowledge about cervical cancer. The study was cross sectional where a saturated sample of 188 CHVs was interviewed. Participants' demographic characteristics were presented by use of median and inter-quartile range for continuous variables and percentages and frequencies for categorical variables. The knowledge of cervical cancer risk factors, signs and symptoms and availability of cervical cancer screening services were grouped based on percentage scores and presented by use of frequencies and percentages, chi-square was used to determine relationship between demographic characteristics and knowledge. Majority at 161(85.6%) were women, 47(25.0%) were aged 40-44, 91(48.4%) had primary education and were small scale farmers at 132(70.2%). Knowledge on risk factors was low, on signs and symptoms was average and on screening services was also average. Education was significant in explaining knowledge on risk factors ($p=0.012$, $\chi^2=3.839$) and knowledge on availability of screening services ($p=0.011$, $\chi^2=8.605$). Occupation was significant in explaining the knowledge on risks factors ($p<0.0001$, $\chi^2=12.722$), signs and symptoms ($p=0.030$, $\chi^2=15.110$) and knowledge on availability of screening services ($p=0.002$, $\chi^2=18.335$). Health centre of attachment was significant in explaining knowledge about risk factors ($p<0.0001$, $\chi^2=71.013$), signs and symptoms ($p<0.0001$, $\chi^2=86.472$) and knowledge on screening services availability ($p<0.0001$, $\chi^2=101.705$). The study points out the training needs of the CHVs which need to be addressed to enable them carry out effective public education about cervical cancer.