

## **Knowledge, attitudes and practices of cervical cancer screening among women who attend traditional churches in Zimbabwe**

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### **Abstract**

Cervical cancer has led to high mortality rates amongst women in Zimbabwe. Some members of Traditional Churches in Zimbabwe (TCZ) view going to the hospital as unholy, and most of the women who go to these churches may not be allowed to access medical care. A cross-sectional study was conducted to ascertain the knowledge, attitudes and practices of cervical cancer screening among these women. A self-administered 20 item questionnaire was given to 125 women. The results of the study showed that knowledge about factors that caused cervical cancer was relatively high. No significant differences were found among the women concerning their feelings towards cervical cancer. However, their attitudes towards Pap smear tests were positive in that a large majority of these women (89, 71.2%) acknowledged that they would be worried and seek medical attention if they felt any signs of cancer lesions. However, an even larger majority (104, 83.2%) of the women reported not having been screened for cervical cancer. The reasons that prevented women from having a Pap smear included: lack of knowledge, belief that cancer was untreatable and religious beliefs that prevented these women from seeking medical care. Overall, there is general need to educate women especially from traditional churches to pursue cervical cancer screening in Zimbabwe.