CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING IN THE PHILIPPINES: INSIGHTS INTO DISPARITIES IN PREVENTION AND DETECTION IN A LOW-MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRY

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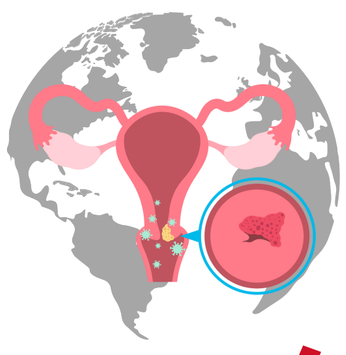


85%

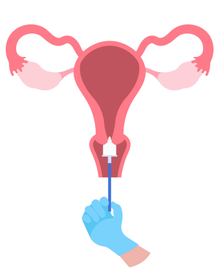
No. of cervical cancer cases and related deaths occur in Low-Middle Income Countries (LMICs)

44% vs 60%

Women who went for cervical cancer screening in LMICs vs high-income countries

7,897 new cervical cancer cases

4,052 deaths attributed to cervical cancer



74,900 women aged 20 years and above who underwent cervical cancer screening

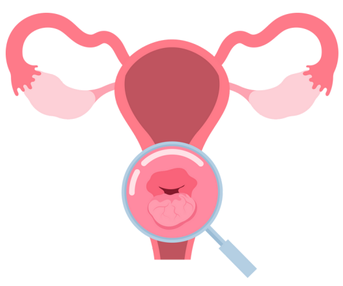
Less than 1% of the estimated eligible population in the Philippines

Region 8, characterized as **one of the poorest regions**, in the Philippiness exhibited the ***highest proportion of women testing positive or suspected of cervical cancer at 23.53%***

Educational level and urban living are identified as influential factors facilitating cervical cancer screening.

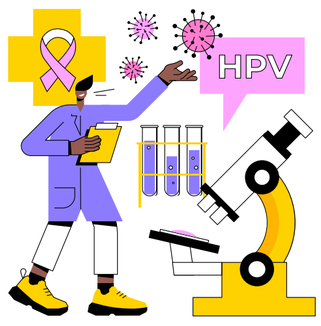
Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA)

Since 2009, the Philippine Department of Health recommended a screening protocol for women aged 25-55, advocating for Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA) every 5-7 years in **areas without Pap smear capabilities.** This method served as the primary screening tool in local health units, district hospitals, and provincial hospitals.



VIA entails applying a diluted acetic acid solution (typically 3-5%) to the cervix, allowing for the observation of changes in cervical tissue.

Positive findings prompt referrals to established centers for comprehensive diagnostic tests and subsequent treatment.



Philippine Cervical Cancer Screening

In 2021 Philippine Guidelines on Periodic Health Examination underscore that women aged 30 to 65 should undergo cervical cancer screening every 3 years with cervical cytology alone or every 5 years with high-risk Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) testing.

VIA continues to be an alternative to Pap smear. Cost-effectiveness analysis conducted locally revealed that HPV testing and co-testing are pricier compared to cytology-based testing, with Pap smear being deemed cost-ineffective due to its high cost

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