

Letter to the editor

Dear Prof. H Simonds

Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), including South Africa, continue to bear the brunt of new cases and the highest mortality from cervical cancer. High-income countries (HICs) and some middle-income countries (MICs) are currently looking at self-sampling HPV DNA testing as a strategy to further improve cervical cancer screening and elimination. While this step is important for eliminating cervical cancer, we still need to acknowledge that there are significant gaps in our healthcare system which need to be identified and rectified to reduce cervical cancer and its socio-economic impact in LMIC. Our study highlights that women living with HIV, who frequently visit healthcare facilities for their treatment, are not screened for cervical cancers in accordance with national and international recommendations. Our findings are aimed at accumulating data on this negative healthcare system-related factor.

To the best of our knowledge, we did not come across a published study that approached the topic from our angle (looking at WLWH, on ART who present with macroscopic cervical cancer). A study by Mohosho published in 2021 partially touched on the matter and the results seem to be relevant to our study.¹ Mohosho's study also highlights that our findings are potentially affecting more provinces in the country, which makes it a point of interest for the national Department of Health.

Yours sincerely

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Reference

1. Mohosho MM. HIV prevalence in patients with cervical carcinoma: A cohort study at a secondary hospital in South Africa. *Medicine*. 2021;100(35):e27030. <https://doi.org/10.1097/MD.00000000000027030>.