

Attitudes and usage of thermocoagulation in Sarawak. Same-day high-risk human papillomavirus (hrHPV) testing and thermoablation in early detection and treatment of cervical pre-cancer: A case series

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The WHO now recommends same-day hrHPV screening and thermoablation for cervical pre-cancer screening and treatment. However, robust real-world data is lacking to validate this strategy in remote rural Sarawak. **Objective:** This study examined the viability of same-day high-risk human papillomavirus (hrHPV) screening and thermoablation treatment for cervical pre-cancer in remote rural Sarawak. **Materials and Methods:** Through a retrospective case series conducted in Long Bedian, a remote health clinic, we assessed the feasibility of point-of-care testing (POCT) for hrHPV, thermoablation practice and the awareness and attitudes surrounding its usage. **Results:** Among the 81 recruited women between February 7th and November 19th, 2023 a 12.34% incidence of hrHPV infection was revealed. Most participants (87.65%) tested negative, while 12.34% tested positive for oncogenic HPV types. Acceptance of the same-day screening and treatment protocol was high among both clinic staff and patients. Among hrHPV-positive women, 50% underwent result-day treatment, 40% were referred for further hospital review and 10% defaulted, primarily due to cultural beliefs. No adverse events were reported among those treated, indicating the safety of the procedure. **Conclusion:** This study highlights the effectiveness, acceptability and safety of the same-day POC testing and result-day treatment strategy in rural Sarawak. These findings support the implementation and expansion of HPV screening and treatment programs to combat cervical cancer in low- and middle-income countries, aligning with WHO recommendations.