Abstract

Objective. To assess Mexico City physicians’ knowledge and practices regarding cervical cancer and human papillomavirus (HPV) to compare obstetricians/gynecologists (ob/gyns) and general practitioners (GPs) on these variables. Material and Methods. In April 2003, 187 ob/gyns and GPs working in 15 hospitals affiliated with the Federal District Secretary of Health (SSDF) completed a self-administered questionnaire. Pearson’s chi-square tests were used to compare ob/gyns and GPs on outcome variables. Results. Nearly all providers (93%) identified HPV as the principal cause of cervical cancer. Ob/gyns had more detailed knowledge about HPV than GPs and were more likely to have heard of common oncogenic strains (p=.000). Sixteen percent of all physicians incorrectly stated that Pap tests should be performed every six months regardless of previous results, and 17% recommended hysterectomy as an option for treating mild or moderate dysplasia. Conclusions. While SSDF physicians had basic knowledge about the cervical cancer-HPV link, screening and management norms are priority areas for educational interventions.

Keywords

cervical cancer; human papillomavirus; physicians; Mexico