

Women with cervical cancer delay seeking med help: Study

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Mumbai: A five-year study conducted in civic-run Sion hospital on the incidence of cervical cancer found that women seek medical help too late for an easy recovery.

The study, which looked at pap smear test results of 36,100 women who attended gynaecology clinic at the hospital between January 2011 and December 2016, also found that some younger women in the 35-39 age group too had advanced disease.

"Surgery is an option only in early stage cervical cancer, but in the study could offer it as a treatment modality to only 32 patients," said professor Dr Niranj Chavan, who is the lead author of the study published in the latest peer reviewed medical journal of European Journal of Gynaecological Oncology.

In the remaining 124 women who were diagnosed with cervical cancer, the disease had spread to other parts of the body and

5-YEAR SURVEY BY SION HOSP

Between Jan 2011 and Dec 2016, Sion hospital screened 36,100 women on the incidence of cervical cancer. Its findings...

➤ Women seek medical help too late for easy recovery from cervical cancer

➤ Women in 35-39 age group too had advanced disease

➤ 53% of the women screened for the study had first sexual contact before the age of 20, 85% were users of oral contraceptive pills and 93% were tobacco users



High incidence in India

➤ Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer worldwide. One in every 5 women suffering from cervical cancer is from India

➤ In 2014, 1.2 lakh new cases and 67,477 deaths occurred in India, contributing to 26% and 27% of global incidence & mortality respectively

needed radiotherapy.

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer worldwide. One in every five women suffering from cervical cancer lives in India. In 2014, 1.2 lakh new cases and 67,477 deaths due to cervical cancer occurred in India, contributing to 26% and 27% of global incidence and mortality respectively.

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"While analysing the risk factors among our study's patients, we found that 53% had first sexual contact before the age of 20 years, 85% were users of oral contraceptive pills and 93% were tobacco users," said Dr Chavan. Maximum number of women screened belonged to the

30-39 age group (35%) and most of them (66%) had more than two children. Also, 77% of the 36,100 women screened belong to lower socio-economic strata.

In almost all cases, cervical cancer is the result of changes in cell caused by the human papilloma virus, which is transmitted through sexual contact. "In our country, women are married young and have no idea if their husband carries the HPV infection through previous unprotected sexual encounter," he said. It is only decades later that HPV infection results in cervical cancer.

Experts say cervical cancer is a preventable disease primarily because of its long lead time—women develop precancerous lesions years before it becomes cancerous. "We need to have a robust screening programme that should start early for women who are sexually active," said the doctor. While a pap smear is most easily available, a genetic HPV test can also be done though it is expensive.