

# CERVICAL CANCER: Improving Access to Screening and Treatment

## BY THE NUMBERS

**530,000**

Over 530,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer globally each year.

**85%**

Approximately 85% of all cervical cancer occurs in low- and middle-income countries.

**23/100,000**

About 23 women per 100,000 die from cervical cancer in sub-Saharan Africa, compared to about 3 per 100,000 in North America.

## The Issue

Most cervical cancers are associated with human papillomavirus (HPV) infection, which is passed from one person to another during sex. The combination of HPV vaccination, regular screening tests, and treatment will help to decrease the number new cases and deaths associated with cervical cancer.

Several screening tests for cervical cancer are available in different countries. These tests include HPV tests, visual inspection of cervix with acetic acid (VIA), and cytology (Pap tests). Screening with cytology can be challenging in settings with limited health infrastructure.

In 2013, the World Health Organization released a new guideline for the screening and treatment of cervical cancer, in which the treatment decision is based on screening tests performed. Treatment can then be provided immediately after the woman has a positive screening test. This new guideline has great promise for making screening more accessible and allowing quick treatment of pre-cancers in low-resource settings and hard-to-reach groups. This guideline may have implications not only in low- and middle-income countries, but potentially in low-resource settings in the U.S. and its territories where new technologies could increase screening and treatment coverages.

**“There are no magic bullets, but the combination of more effective and affordable tools to prevent and treat cervical cancer will help release the strain on stretched health budgets, especially in low-income countries, and contribute drastically to the elimination of cervical cancer.”**

Dr. Nathalie Broutet, WHO cervical cancer expert



## CDC's Response

**Latin America:** CDC and local health leaders develop training materials to support public health workers as they strengthen cervical cancer screening programs in Bolivia and El Salvador.

**Sub-Saharan Africa:** CDC and its partners build on current healthcare activities to provide HIV/AIDS and cancer screening and treatment services. The partnership develops standards, tools, and guidance to make data available for planning and improving global cervical cancer programs.

**Pacific Islands:** Since many areas in this region lack screening services, CDC and its partners organized an expert panel to make recommendations for improving screening, including adopting VIA and primary HPV testing.



Health professionals from CDC, Thai NCI and Thai MOPH outside a health center in Ubon Ratchatani

**In Thailand:** CDC, the Thai Ministry of Public Health and the Thai National Cancer Institute are introducing HPV testing to screen for cervical cancer.

## Our Partners

- American Cancer Society
- Ministries of Health
- Pan American Health Organization
- Union for International Cancer Control
- World Health Organization

For further information, please visit:  
[www.cdc.gov/cancer/international/](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/international/)

*Cervical cancer is a leading cause of cancer deaths in developing countries.*



### Publications:

Joseph R, Manosontorn S, Petcharoen N, Sangrajrang S, Senkomago V, Saraiya M. Assessing Cervical Cancer Screening Coverage Using a Population-Based Behavioral Risk Factor Survey-Thailand, 2010. *J Womens Health (Larchmt)*. 2015 Dec;24(12):966-8. doi: 10.1089/jwh.2015.5624. PubMed PMID: 26653868.

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