

1. Summary

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among women, with more than 500.000 new cases/year, and more than 300.000 premature deaths a year. It is also the most common women cancer in the developing world, where about 80% of new cases arise. Infections with oncogenic human papillomaviruses (HPVs) causes cervical cancer with a long latency period of at least 10 to 15 years during which cervical cancer develops. Because of the long preclinical period cervical cancer can be prevented by screening, followed treatment of premalignant cervical lesions. Organised screening protects against cervical cancer, and screening programmes today identify women with abnormal cytology for further examinations by colposcopy and surgical removal of a histologically verified cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN), the precursor to cervical cancer.

The European Network on Cervical Cancer Screening is operating in 12 Member States, and aims at

- improving the quality of laboratory work on "Cervical Cancer Screening"
- at using technological innovation for improving the screening process, and
- at using the statistical evidence in order to evaluate the impact of screening on cancer prevention.

The planned network work (contract SPC.2002475) on "Cervical Cancer Screening" from 16.12.02 to 15.12.03 is presented in section 2, and the previous work in section 5.

The performed work is presented in section 3, as follows:

1. Quality Assurance and Quality Control in screening process (in section 3.1).
2. "Monitoring, Epidemiology and Evaluation" (in section 3.2).
3. Experimental investigation of the "New Technologies" in cervical cancer screening, including HPV-tests, and discussion of their merits and limitations (in section 3.3).
4. The improvement of the WebForum for easy Internet-based communication and dissemination of the results, including the Guidelines (in section 3.4).

The network results were published in 91 publications in 2003, and 185 publications in 2000-2002.

The 2nd Draft of the "European Guidelines for Cervical Cancer Screening" (see the attached document of 267 pages) was released in December 2003. The electronic format of the guidelines is available in the Internet at www.cancer-network.de.

The detailed results obtained in the 15 institutions of the Network are presented in the attached 15 Individual Final Reports (687 pages).

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