

International Journal of Health Science

NURSING CARE FOR WOMEN WITH CERVICAL CANCER

Andréia Marques Rodrigues

Faculdade Supremo Redentor, Brazil

<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6427-1888>

Ana Clara de Medeiros Roberto

Faculdade Supremo Redentor, Brazil

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9489-4137>

Elinaldo Silva Martins

Faculdade Supremo Redentor, Brazil

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1982-7844>

Emerson Corrêa Gomes

Faculdade Supremo Redentor, Brazil

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9555-7121>

Ivanildo Fonseca Reis

Faculdade Supremo Redentor, Brazil

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1317-7516>

Samara Susana Sodré Amorim

Faculdade Supremo Redentor, Brazil

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-8712-0852>

Taline Estefany Martins

Faculdade Supremo Redentor, Brazil

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5638-365X>

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Abstract: Cervical cancer, caused mainly by HPV, is a public health problem in Brazil, with high prevalence and mortality rates. Early detection is crucial for a favorable prognosis, highlighting the importance of nursing care. This study aims to understand this assistance, describing interventions used, identifying challenges faced by nurses and analyzing the effectiveness of practices. Using a literature review, studies that address nursing care for patients with cervical cancer were analyzed. Expected results include a comprehensive understanding of nursing practices, detailed description of interventions used, identification of challenges faced by nurses, analysis of the effectiveness of practices, and suggestion of directions for future research. These results have the potential to contribute to improving nursing care and, consequently, the quality of life of patients with cervical cancer.

Keywords: HPV. Cervical cancer. Prevention.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of cervical cancer is the result of changes in cellular structure caused by certain strains of the human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is primarily transmitted through sexual contact, which occurs when an individual comes into direct contact with infected skin or mucous membranes (Michelin et al., 2015). An advantage of this form of cancer is that it has a prolonged period of development of the precursor lesion, facilitating its detection and treatment in its early stages, leading to a favorable prognosis (Dias et al., 2019).

The prevalence and mortality rates for this specific pathology in Brazil are quite significant and, as such, it is considered a major health problem. It is important to note that this affliction can be treated effectively when identified and treated early (Dias et al., 2019). For Michelin et al. (2015) highlight

the importance of implementing measures aimed at mitigating the impact of this disease, such as promoting health awareness and early detection, as well as preventive strategies.

The National Cancer Institute, INCA, reports that cervical cancer is the third most prevalent type of cancer among women and the fourth leading cause of death among women in Brazil (Brazil, 2017). Cancer affects women between 30 and 50 years old. However, there are some factors that can increase the likelihood of developing this disease in other age groups as well (Brasil, 2017).

Cervical cancer is the second most prevalent type of cancer in the North, Northeast and Central-West regions with rates of 21.20, 17.62 and 15.92 cases per 100 thousand women, respectively, excluding skin tumors. non-melanoma. In the South region, it occupies the fourth position with a rate of 17.48 cases per 100 thousand women, and in the Southeast region, it occupies the fifth position with a rate of 12.01 cases per 100 thousand women (Brazil, 2019).

According to Ceolin et al. (2020), cervical cancer is mainly caused by HPV. However, there are several other factors that also contribute to the risk of developing this cancer. These factors include smoking, immunosuppression, use of oral contraceptives, low socioeconomic status, multiple sexual partners, early sexual activity during adolescence, and the presence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). All of these factors increase a woman's likelihood of developing cervical cancer (Ceolin et al., 2020).

On May 16, 2013, Decree number 874 came into force, which established the National Cancer Prevention and Control Policy. The main objective of this policy is to mitigate cancer mortality and morbidity rates, reducing its incidence and, at the same time, improving the quality of life of individuals who have been affected by cancer. This is

achieved through a multifaceted approach that includes the promotion of healthy habits, disease prevention, early detection, timely treatment and palliative care measures (Brasil, 2019).

Thus, Decree number 874 states that:

Article 12: The principle of comprehensive care within the scope of the National Policy for the Prevention and Control of Cancer is the organization of actions and services aimed at comprehensive care for people with cancer in the Health Care Network for People with Chronic Diseases in the scope of the SUS, based on parameters and criteria of need and guidelines based on scientific evidence.

As stated by the Ministry of Health in 2013, Basic Care (AB) or Primary Health Care (PHC) serves as the main gateway into the health system and is the preferred point of contact for users. As such, it is a crucial tool in preventing disease and maintaining overall health. A notable aspect of the actions carried out by AP teams is the focus on controlling cervical cancer (Brasil, 2019). The nursing team plays a crucial role in this regard, as it is responsible for carrying out nursing consultations – one of the most effective means of promoting women’s health. Their efforts aim at early detection and providing guidance on the benefits of preventive measures (Brasil, 2019).

INCA, responsible for the prevention and control of cervical cancer, considers accessibility to information and the reduction of obstacles to health services as critical factors that must be guaranteed (Brazil, 2018). However, a crucial aspect of prevention is the HPV vaccine, which protects against four subtypes of HPV. Among these, subtypes 6 and 11 cause genital warts, while subtypes 16 and 18 are responsible for approximately 70% of cervical cancer cases (Brazil, 2018).

The main means of screening and identifying cervical cancer is through cytopathological

examination, more commonly known as the Pap smear. The Ministry of Health recommended that women aged 25 or over who have practiced sexual activity undergo the test, which must be repeated until they reach the age of 64 (Brazil, 2011).

In both public and private health systems, cytopathological examination is available and is considered a low-cost but highly effective screening tool. This exam is particularly beneficial for early detection and screening of cervical cancer, making it a crucial aspect of adherence to healthcare. (Dantas et al., 2018)

As stated in the “Cervical and Breast Cancer Control” manual for Basic Care, the objective of the cervical cancer treatment line is to provide women with affordable and compassionate access to specialized services and actions that promote the prevention of cervical cancer. This includes access to screening for precursor lesions, early detection and timely, qualified and appropriate treatment (Brasil, 2013).

Cervical cancer screening is based on the natural history of the disease and the recognition that invasive cancer evolves from precursor lesions (high-grade squamous intraepithelial lesions and adenocarcinoma in situ), which can be detected and treated appropriately, preventing progression to cancer. (Instituto Oncoguia, 2023)

In the view of Rocha et al. (2018), nurses have a crucial role to play in the Family Health Strategy, namely in promoting women’s health and providing care to them. To achieve the objectives, effective communication between health professionals is vital, encouraging greater participation in cytopathological examinations. By doing this, these women will have a greater sense of security and belonging within the unit.

JUSTIFICATION

Among women, cervical cancer is one of the main causes of death and is closely associated with neoplasms, particularly in less developed countries (Oliveira et al., 2016). However, when detected in its early stages, this form of cancer has high cure rates. This highlights the importance of timely identification and continuous monitoring of this condition (Nogueira, et al., 2019).

The high incidence of cervical cancer in women globally represents a major challenge for healthcare systems. Although screening and intervention approaches are available, many women diagnosed with this disease face difficulties related to clinical management, emotional support, education and follow-up during and after treatment (Michelin et al., 2015). Nursing care plays a crucial role in the care of these patients.

As one of the most important vocations in healthcare, nursing is a cornerstone of the medical field, especially when it comes to women's health (Nogueira et al., 2019). Its meaning transcends the mere implementation of medical techniques; It also encompasses the ability to recognize early warning signs and symptoms, which is vital in the timely detection of various diseases (Michelin, et al., 2015). However, the obligations of nursing professionals do not stop at diagnosis. They are also dedicated to closely overseeing the progress and care of patients once an illness or condition has been determined.

An integral component of nursing is education. Nurses provide guidance, clarify uncertainties, and provide important information to help women understand their health status, treatment options, and potential outcomes (Oliveira et al., 2016). In situations where rehabilitation is necessary, whether due to chronic illness or post-surgical recovery, nursing professionals are actively involved in the process, providing guidance and assistance

to ensure that patients regain their optimal physical and functional capabilities (Michelin et al., 2015).

The provision of care by nurses is fundamental to improving patients' quality of life (Panzetti et al., 2019). Through their unwavering commitment and compassionate approach, these experts not only offer technical assistance but also provide a human touch. Their priority is to understand the needs and emotions of their patients and they aim to offer complete and compassionate care throughout treatment (Rocha et al., 2018).

Additionally, nursing is dedicated to enlightening patients by providing lucid instructions and recommendations regarding their health status, possible therapies, and effective self-care methods.

Women who have been diagnosed with cervical cancer can experience a better quality of life, greater treatment adherence, and better clinical outcomes with ongoing skilled nursing care (Panzetti et al., 2019). Specific nursing interventions designed to educate patients, provide emotional support, manage symptoms, and coordinate care can lead to reduced morbidity, improved quality of life, and potentially higher survival rates for these individuals.

In addition to providing immediate care, nursing work also encompasses health promotion and disease prevention as integral components (Ribeiro, et al., 2019). The goal of these efforts is to not only cure existing diseases but also prevent them from occurring. This is especially significant in the case of cervical cancer, where the preventive role of nursing becomes even more pronounced. Nurses educate patients about the importance of having a Pap smear periodically, which can identify any cellular changes in the cervix before they turn into cancer (Ribeiro, et al., 2019).

The theme "Nursing Care for Women

with Cervical Cancer” is extremely relevant, as it allows for an in-depth analysis of care practices and interventions that can be applied to guarantee excellent care for these patients. Studying this topic contributes to the advancement of nursing practices, highlighting the areas that require more attention and the strategies that have proven to be more effective in caring for these women.

For all these reasons, this project is justified, as it aims to deepen knowledge about the role of nursing in this context and contribute to increasingly humanized and efficient practices in the care of women with cervical cancer.

GOALS

GENERAL GOALS

- Understand the nursing care provided to women with cervical cancer, identifying effective practices and directions for future research.

SPECIFIC GOALS

- Describe the nursing interventions used in the care of women with cervical cancer, including pain management, palliative care and emotional support;
- Identify the challenges and obstacles faced by nurses in caring for patients with cervical cancer and;
- Analyze scientific studies that evaluate the effectiveness of nursing practices in managing physical and psychological symptoms caused by the pathology.

METHODOLOGY

To carry out this research, the bibliographic review methodology was used. The review focused on relevant publications from the last decade, covering literature in Portuguese, English and Spanish. The main purpose was to examine studies that specifically investigated nursing care for patients diagnosed with

cervical cancer. On the other hand, any articles that did not directly refer to nursing care or that delved into other forms of cancer were disregarded for analysis.

Therefore, renowned databases such as PubMed, Scielo and LILACS were used to collect data. Exploration of these databases was driven by pertinent keywords, including “cervical cancer,” “nursing care,” and “nursing care.” The article selection process began with examining the titles and abstracts to determine their relevance to the topic addressed. Then, the chosen articles were read in full.

The process of analyzing the compiled data involved merging key findings, which was followed by a comprehensive assessment and deliberation of the results. Of paramount importance to the study was the ethical consideration of referencing and proper citations from all sources to avoid any form of plagiarism.

During the development of this research, a literature review was carried out, which involved the presentation and analysis of specifically selected articles. These articles were categorized into themes that explored different types of interventions, treatment effects and emotional support.

Therefore, the conclusion of the research summarized the main findings and discussed their implications for nursing practice. Furthermore, directions for future research in the area were suggested.

EXPECTED RESULTS

It is expected to gain a comprehensive understanding of effective nursing practices in the care of women with cervical cancer. This includes a detailed analysis of the interventions used, addressing both physical and emotional aspects of care. The research aims to identify practices that have proven successful and that can be replicated or adapted in different healthcare contexts.

One of the expected results is the detailed description of nursing interventions used in the treatment of women with cervical cancer. This encompasses pain management, palliative care and emotional support. The research will seek to elucidate how these interventions are applied in practice, their benefits and limitations, and how they contribute to improving patients' quality of life.

Another important result is the identification of the challenges and obstacles faced by nurses in caring for these patients. These include institutional barriers, resource limitations, emotional and physical challenges faced by patients, and how these factors affect the delivery of care. Understanding these challenges is crucial to developing strategies that minimize them.

The research also aims to analyze scientific studies that evaluate the effectiveness of

nursing practices in managing physical and psychological symptoms caused by cervical cancer. This analysis is expected to provide insights into which practices are most effective, providing an evidence base for improving nursing care.

Finally, another expected result is the identification of gaps in current knowledge and the suggestion of directions for future research. This may include underexplored areas in nursing care, new therapeutic approaches, or the need for studies to monitor the long-term effects of interventions.

Based on the above, it is expected that the results of this research will contribute significantly to the understanding and improvement of nursing care for women with cervical cancer, offering a detailed overview of current practices and pointing out paths for future advances in the area.

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