

South West Public Health

Section 7a Screening & Immunisations

Bulletin



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Contents:

- ICARS Newsletter 9.05.22
- NHS Cervical Screening Programme - responding to private HPV self-sample tests
- NHS Cervical Screening Programme - HPVvalidate Self-Sampling Study
- Further Information

ICARS Newsletter 9.05.22

Please find this week's ICARS newsletter attached to this email.

NHS Cervical Screening Programme - responding to private HPV self-sample tests

The purchase of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) self-sampling home testing kits is increasing. Results of these private tests will not be acted on by the NHS Cervical Screening Programme (NHS CSP) and cannot be recorded in an individual's NHS screening record.

If a private test result is positive, the person should be advised that having HPV does not mean they have or will get cervical cancer. HPV is common; over 80% of the population will get it at some point during their lives.

Individuals eligible for the NHS CSP remain so, even if they have had a private test. Most HPV infections clear themselves without causing problems. If someone has persistent HPV infection, it will be identified when they accept their next NHS CSP invitation.

Cervical cancer usually develops slowly over 10 years in three stages:

1. Infection with HPV;
2. Development of abnormal cells if the immune system does not rid the HPV infection;
3. Development of cancer if abnormal cells are not treated.

NHS Cervical Screening Programme - HPVValidate Self-Sampling Study

Testing in the NHS Cervical Screening Programme (NHS CSP) changed in 2019 and now individuals are screened first for high risk-Human Papillomavirus (hr-HPV). The pathway is at hr-HPV Primary Screening Pathway.

This test is more sensitive to high grade cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN) than the previous test, cytology alone. More individuals at risk of developing cervical cancer are identified and more lives saved by determining risk earlier.

Screening first for hr-HPV has unlocked new opportunities in the NHS CSP, including HPV self-sampling as an alternative to the traditional clinician taken cervical screening sample. However, HPV testing platforms have not been approved specifically for HPV self-sampling. NHSEI in partnership with DHSC are undertaking a clinical validation specifically for HPV self-sampling. Further information on the HPVValidate study is available at the following Screening Blog.

In due course, further information on the use of HPV self-sampling in the NHS CSP will be cascaded.

Further Information

- Back issues of these bulletins and attachments are available on the NHSEI website [here](#).
- If you have any questions or wish to provide feedback, please contact the Integrated Public Health Team at england.swscreeningandimms@nhs.net

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