

# Assessing Women's Cervical Cancer Burdens, Knowledge, and Attitudes in Central Uganda

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## Introduction

- Cervical cancer rates have declined significantly in industrialized countries in recent years, but the disease remains a leading cause of cancer related mortality for women in Uganda (Nakisige C., 2017).
- Preventative measures such as screening exams and vaccinations reduce cervical cancer risk; understanding Ugandan women's knowledge and attitudes towards these practices is necessary to promote effective services (Nakisige C., 2017; Nawagi F., 2017).

## Study Aims

- To assess women's perceptions and awareness of cervical cancer risks in Kyadondo County, Uganda.

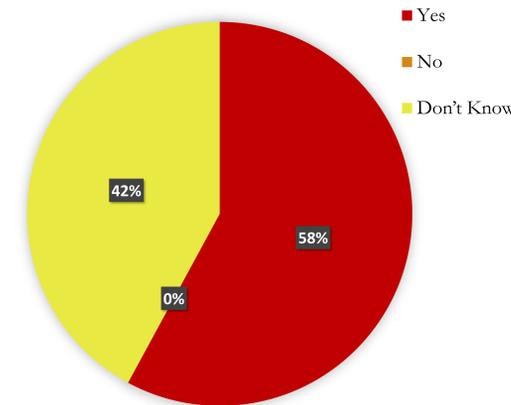
## Methods

- This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at both Makerere University and the Medical College of Wisconsin
- This study was conducted from June-August 2018, in the Kampala district in the central region of Uganda, at the Child and Family Foundation of Uganda (CFU).
- The study used a previously verified cross-sectional questionnaire, offered in English and Luganda.
- The questionnaire was administered orally by a study team member and the associated discussion was audio recorded.
- Based on participant responses and discussions, trends were extrapolated from the data.

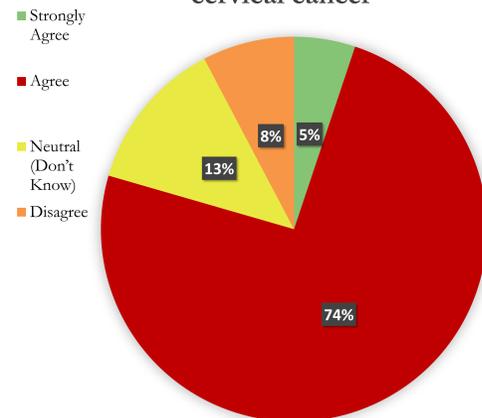
## Results



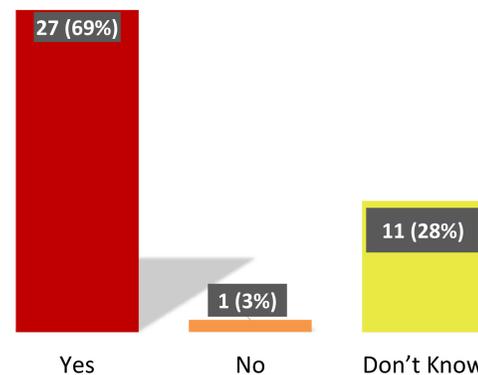
Can someone be vaccinated against cervical cancer?



I would vaccinate myself against cervical cancer



Do you think cervical cancer is curable if detected early?  
N=36



Community Participant Statement, N=39	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am at risk of getting cervical cancer	5%	64%	21%	10%	0%
Women who have had sexually transmitted diseases are more likely to get cervical cancer	5%	38%	13%	44%	0%
Cervical cancer is a death sentence for most people	0%	33%	23%	41%	3%
There is little a woman can do to reduce her risk of getting cervical cancer	3%	33%	31%	31%	3%
Women who have cervical cancer will have some kind of symptoms showing it	3%	51%	33%	13%	0%

Map of Uganda available from: <http://ugandamap.facts.co/ugandamapof/ugandamap.php>

## Discussion

- A total of 39 women participated in the study, with the average age being 28.7.
- All of the women had heard of cancer, however a small proportion (n=3, 7.7%) had never heard of cervical cancer and only 6 (15.4%) women had been previously screened.
- The women who had not heard of cervical cancer were referred to the CFU from field healthcare workers, and had not visited a free healthcare clinic previously.
- Nearly half of the women (n=16, 47.2%) did not know if there was a vaccination that could prevent cervical cancer.
- The vast majority (n=35, 90%) did not know any symptoms of cervical cancer.
- A majority of women (n=29, 74.4%) indicated that they would vaccinate themselves against cervical cancer, and those who did not know or want a vaccination feared expired vaccines and adverse events.

## Conclusion

- Women attending healthcare clinic in Kampala indicated strong general knowledge of the risk of cervical cancer but were unaware of many screening and preventative measures.
- There is an overall positive attitude towards learning about cervical cancer although fear, misinformation, and lack of resources constrain women's health care seeking behavior.
- Efforts should be made to educate women in these communities and promote access to available resources.
- Future research aims to expand the study population to include women from other areas of the Kampala region.

## Acknowledgments

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