

Introducing and scaling up testing for human papillomavirus as part of a comprehensive programme for prevention and control of cervical cancer

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

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ISBN 978-92-4-001516-6 (electronic version) ISBN 978-92-4-001517-3 (print edition)

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Suggested citation. Introducing and scaling up testing for human papillomavirus as part of a comprehensive programme for prevention and control of cervical cancer: a step-by-step guide. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020. Licence: **CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO**.

Cataloguing-in-Publication (CIP) data. CIP data are available at http://apps.who.int/iris.

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Printed in Switzerland

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Acknowledgements

Introducing and scaling up testing for human papillomavirus as part of a comprehensive programme for prevention and control of cervical cancer: a step-by-step guide was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) Working Group on increasing access to screening and treatment to accelerate plans for the elimination of cervical cancer, under the coordination of Nathalie Broutet from the WHO Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research.

The general writing, integration and overall document compilation was achieved by Owen Demke (Clinton Health Access Initiative [CHAI]), Mauricio Maza and Karla Alfaro (Basic Health International [BHI]), Anita Sands (WHO Department of Regulation and Safety) and Lara Vojnov (WHO Department of Global HIV, Hepatitis and STI Programmes).

This guide is the result of a collaboration of experts from different backgrounds and organizations, including WHO, BHI and CHAI, with funding support from the UNDP-UNFPA-UNICEF-WHO-World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP), at the Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research, at WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

WHO addresses its sincere gratitude to the following people for their knowledgeable contributions during the development of this guide and for their review of this document:

Maribel Almonte, International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), France Silvina Arrossi, Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones científicas y Tecnicas (CONICET), Argentina Partha Basu, IARC, France Neerja Bathla, FIGO, India Joanna Cain, International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), United States of America (USA) Ann Chao, National Cancer Institute (NCI), USA Marylis Corbex, WHO, Denmark Silvia de Sanjose, PATH, USA Joakim Dillner, Karolinska Institute, Sweden Elena Fidarova, WHO, Switzerland Richard Freeman, CHAI, Switzerland Murat Gutelkin, Ministry of Health of Turkey, Turkey Rei Haruyama, WHO, Switzerland David Hawkes, VCS Foundation, Australia Francesca Holmes, PATH, USA Sharon Kapambwe, Ministry of Health of Zambia, Zambia Silvana Luciani, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), USA Trevor Peter, CHAI, Botswana Marion Saville, VCS Foundation, Australia Kathleen Schemeler, MD Anderson Cancer Center, USA Sara Simpson, EquiACT, France Ute Ströher, WHO, Switzerland Julie Torode, Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), Switzerland Elizabeth Unger, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), USA Yin Ling Woo, University of Malaysia, Malaysia Fanghui Zhao, Cancer Institute and Hospital, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences (CICAMS), China.

WHO would also particularly like to thank the authors of the country case studies:

Silvina Arrossi, CONICET, Argentina Karla Alfaro, BHI, El Salvador Mauricio Maza, BHI, El Salvador Yin Ling Woo, University of Malaysia, Malaysia Murat Gutelkin, Ministry of Health of Turkey, Turkey Sharon Kpambwe, Ministry of Health of Zambia, Zambia.

Technical editing, design, layout and proofreading were provided by Green Ink, United Kingdom **(www.greenink.co.uk)**.

Acronyms and abbreviations

Basic Health International
Clinton Health Access Initiative
cervical intraepithelial neoplasia
civil society organization
external quality assessment
human papillomavirus
internal quality control
in vitro diagnostic (medical device)
loop electrosurgical excision procedure
large loop excision of the transformation zone
laboratory information management system
ministry of health
nucleic acid test
nongovernmental organization
Pan American Health Organization
Papanicolaou test
population-based cancer registries
public-private partnership
procurement supply management
quality control
service-level agreement
standard operating procedures
sexually transmitted infection
technical working group
visual inspection with acetic acid
World Health Organization

Scope of the guidance

This guidance is intended to be used by programme managers following the decision to introduce human papillomavirus (HPV) virological testing as a screening assay in their national cervical cancer prevention and control programme. The guidance includes a step-by-step process to be followed after the decision has been made to specifically introduce and/or scale-up HPV virological testing for screening, which would be followed up with adequate management within the context of cervical cancer prevention.

This guidance builds on the 2016 Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) HPV testing manual¹ and provides information for policy-makers, programme managers and heads of reference laboratories on the selection of an HPV virological test, quality control considerations, how to plan the logistical and practical aspects of HPV virological testing, and other practical considerations. It does not cover how to decide whether or not to introduce HPV testing, how to communicate HPV virological testing results to women, other screening methodologies beyond HPV virological testing, or strategies to identify barriers to screening and how to overcome them to increase screening coverage. These will be addressed in other World Health Organization (WHO) programmatic guidelines to increase access to screening and treatment to prevent cervical cancer. HPV virological technologies will be referred to as HPV tests in this guidance document.

The objective of this guidance is to present a practical reference document that provides a summary of and links for all the existing relevant WHO guidance for cervical cancer screening and diagnosis that can support the introduction of HPV testing for screening.





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