



19th March 2009

Dear Colleague,

Change of arrangements for follow up of women requiring “vault cytology”

The NHS Cervical Screening Programme (NHS CSP) and the National Colposcopy Professional Advisory Group have announced national changes relating to the recall status of women requiring vault cytology from mid September 2008. Following a number of requests from service providers for clarification relating to this issue, the North West Cervical Screening Quality Assurance Executive group has produced the following recommendations.

In summary, women who need vault cytology following surgery will no longer be included in the NHS Cervical Screening Programme; these women will be ceased from recall as ‘no cervix’. The screening agency will therefore not recall, record tests or send out results for any women who has been ceased from recall as ‘no cervix’.

The National Colposcopy Professional Advisory Group has produced the following guidance:

- For women who were on routine recall and no CIN was present in the hysterectomy specimen then no further vaginal vault cytology is required.
- For women not on routine recall and with no CIN in the hysterectomy specimen the gynaecologist may need to arrange appropriate investigations. These may include colposcopic examination of the vaginal vault or vaginal vault cytology.
- For women who undergo hysterectomy and are found to have completely excised CIN it is still recommended these women should undergo vaginal vault cytology at 6 and 18 months following hysterectomy.
- In women who undergo hysterectomy and have incompletely excised CIN then follow up should be conducted as if the cervix was still in situ. For CIN I this would be vault cytology at 6, 12 and 24 months and for CIN II or III then vault cytology at 6 and 12 months followed by 9 annual vault cytologies.
- Women who undergo radical trachelectomy as part of conservative management of cervical cancer should remain under the care and guidance of the treating gynaecologist. Future follow up will be determined by the treating gynaecologist and the woman will no longer be deemed to be within the National Screening Programme.

Performing the Vault Sample

The recommendation from the North West Cervical Screening Quality Assurance Reference Centre is that vault cytology sample should be performed with a colposcopic examination and therefore women requiring this should be referred to Colposcopy.

Responsibility for follow up care

- The responsibility for determining follow up procedure for each individual woman will reside with the gynaecologist involved in her care. The gynaecologist will be responsible for the failsafe for this small group of women and therefore it would be sensible for gynaecologists to make sure GPs and patients receive specific written guidance as to future follow up.
- It is recommended that the woman could be referred for Colposcopy examination and vault sample at the time of listing for hysterectomy. Patient choice will need to be considered regarding the location for the follow up.
- It is the responsibility of the GP to deal with queries regarding vault cytology which are patient initiated.
- The GP is responsible for re-referring defaulters, if notified by a hospital colleague / laboratory via failsafe procedures.
- If CIN is found in the hysterectomy sample, the laboratory has a responsibility to ensure that the treating gynaecologist is informed.

Exceptions to the above

These recommendations do not affect women who have undergone a **subtotal** hysterectomy, and thus still have a cervix. These women must remain within the NHS Cervical Screening Programme.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter further please contact us at the above address.



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North West Cervical Screening Quality Assurance Reference Centre