



Dr. Tamar Skhirtladze, National Screening Center, Tbilisi, Georgia

Host institution: International Agency for Research on Cancer, Lyon, France

Enhancing Screening Services for Early Detection of Cervical Cancer in Georgia

In Georgia, cervical cancer is fifth most common cancer among female population. The incidence is 16.7 and mortality 8.5 per 100 000 females (NCDC, 2019). Over 95% of cervical cancer cases are linked to genital infection with HPVs. While HPV resolves spontaneously in the majority of people, it can develop into severe cervical abnormalities in some women, and eventually into cervical cancer. Fighting against cancer is one of the priority of healthcare system of Georgia; therefore, in 2008 the National Screening Center was established by Tbilisi City Hall with the purpose to implement Cancer Screening Program. The aim of the program is to reduce mortality caused by cancer through its early detection; The Program includes free screening examinations for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer.

Since 2008, the screening program has strong achievements, though it still faces challenges that constantly needs improvement. The most tangible issue is the coverage rate of the target population in cervical cancer screening program, which fluctuates between 16 and 18%. Based on European guidelines, achieving the reduction of incidence and mortality of the cervical cancer through screening is possible when coverage is not less than 70%. The other issue is related to low sensitivity of Pap test, which leads to a high proportion of false-negative results and consequently missing of the cervical pre malignant lesions.

Based on the mentioned, it is important to re-evaluate the effectiveness of existing cervical screening model in Georgia, perform capacity assessment, do the SWOT analysis and propose to introduce to the policy makers the most effective, accurate, and cost-effective model for cervical cancer screening in Georgia. I believe that the project will have positive impact on healthcare system of Georgia, promote cervical cancer early detection, and minimize expenses for diagnostics and treatment of oncological diseases.