



## Pap Smear Test: A Neglected Necessity among Iranian Women

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### *Dear Editor-in-Chief,*

Pap smear test, also known as the Papanicolaou test, is an essential screening tool for cervical cancer. This non-invasive method collects cells from the cervix to identify precancerous and cancerous changes. Early detection through Pap smear can significantly reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with cervical cancer (1-4). The sensitivity of Pap smears ranges from 70% to 89.79%, while specificity can be as high as 95.34%, indicating that the test is effective in diagnosing cervical lesions (2, 4).

Recent studies show that while many Iranian women have undergone a Pap smear test at least once, the rate of regular screening is significantly low. The prevalence of Pap smear tests among Iranian women shows significant differences, especially in the regular screening rate (5, 6). The results of a meta-analysis showed that while 46.52% of women had undergone a Pap smear test at least once, only 17.80% participated in regular screening, indicating a low rate of screening and potential underdiagnosis (7). Socioeconomic factors strongly influence these statistics, with wealthier women showing higher uptake rates for screening. It is reported that 86% of women have been screened at least once, but most of them live in urban areas and belong to the affluent classes of society (8). Another study shows that 52.4% of women in Tehran had done a Pap smear test. However, the level of knowledge was low, with only 16% having appropriate knowledge about Pap smear testing. This highlights the importance of raising awareness and education to increase screening rates (9, 10). A study in Jiroft found that only 1.4% of women had abnormal Pap smears, highlighting the need for increased screening efforts (11).

Pap smear is the cornerstone of cervical cancer prevention strategies. Its role in early detection is critical to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with cervical cancer. Regular screening not only facilitates timely treatment but also enables women to take preventive steps to maintain their reproductive health (12). Still, some studies highlight that while awareness is increasing, regular screening rates remain insufficient and require targeted health interventions to promote awareness and increase participation in Pap smear testing among Iranian women, especially among lower socioeconomic classes (13–15).

**Key Words:** Pap smear test, Iran, Papanicolaou test, Women.

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