

UPDATE FROM THE NATIONAL CERVICAL SCREENING PROGRAM

A recent MJA publication¹ and accompanying MJA Insight article² discussed the option under the current National Cervical Screening Program (NCSP) policy, for some under-screened or never-screened patients to participate in the NCSP by providing a self-collected vaginal swab for HPV testing. The Insight article poses the question of whether more participants should be able to access the self-collection option.

Following the commencement of the renewed NCSP in 2017, emerging evidence in 2018³ has highlighted the comparable accuracy of self-collected tests to detect high-grade abnormalities (CIN2+ and CIN3+). In light of this emerging evidence, the Australian Government Department of Health recently convened an Expert Advisory Group to further consider the evidence and possible changes to the current policy on self-collection.

At this time, the NCSP advises that self-collection for HPV screening should continue to be offered to under-screened (more than two years overdue) or never-screened women aged 30 and over, who decline a speculum examination and cervical sampling by a clinician. The NCSP's policy for self-collection can be found [here](#).

The Australian Government Department of Health will ensure RANZCOG is involved in any consultation processes around any policy changes.

7 February 2020

References

^[1] McGauran and Pendelbury, HPV Swab self-collection and cervical cancer in women who have sex with women MJA 2019 doi: 10.5694/mja2.50457

^[2] <https://insightplus.mja.com.au/2020/4/hpv-swab-self-collection-relax-the-restrictions/>

^[3] Arbyn Marc, Smith Sara B, Temin Sarah, Sultana Farhana, Castle Philip. Detecting cervical precancer and reaching underscreened women by using HPV testing on self samples: updated meta-analyses BMJ 2018; 363 :k4823