



Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Drama-Based Intervention on Cervical Cancer Screening Uptake: A Mixed Methods Study in Peri-Urban Kampala

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Abstract

Cervical cancer is a leading cause of cancer-related mortality among women in Uganda. Screening uptake in peri-urban settings such as Kampala remains low, indicating a need for culturally appropriate health promotion strategies to address knowledge gaps and barriers. This study evaluated the effectiveness of a community-based drama intervention on cervical cancer screening uptake among women aged 30-49 in peri-urban Kampala. Its objectives were to measure changes in screening rates and to explore participants' perceptions of the intervention and screening barriers. A sequential explanatory mixed methods design was employed. A quasi-experimental pre-post study compared screening uptake in intervention and control communities (n=400). This was followed by focus group discussions with purposively selected participants to explore the quantitative findings in depth. Screening uptake in the intervention group increased significantly more than in the control group, showing a 32% absolute increase post-intervention. Qualitative findings identified three key themes: drama enhanced relatable understanding of screening, addressed stigma, and built collective support for attending health facilities. The drama-based intervention was effective in increasing cervical cancer screening uptake. Its success is linked to conveying health messages in an accessible format that addressed psychosocial and community-level barriers. Integrate drama-based education into national cervical cancer prevention programmes. Train community health workers in participatory theatre techniques. Further research should assess the long-term sustainability and adaptability of this approach to other health issues. Cervical cancer screening, health education, theatre for

development, mixed methods, Uganda, health promotion This study provides evidence on the efficacy of a low-cost, scalable arts-based intervention for improving cancer screening in a low-resource setting.

Keywords: *Mixed Methods Research, Health Education Interventions, Cervical Cancer Screening, Sub-Saharan Africa, Community-Based Participatory Research, Health Behaviour Change, Qualitative and Quantitative Evaluation*

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