

Barriers and Facilitators for Telehealth Use during Cervical Cancer Screening and Care: A Literature Review

Authors : Reuben Mugisha, Stella Bakibinga

Abstract : The cervical cancer burden is a global threat, but more so in low income settings where more than 85% of mortality cases occur due to lack of sufficient screening programs. There is consequently a lack of early detection of cancer and precancerous cells among women. Studies show that 3% to 35% of deaths could have been avoided through early screening depending on prognosis, disease progression, environmental and lifestyle factors. In this study, a systematic literature review is undertaken to understand potential barriers and facilitators as documented in previous studies that focus on the application of telehealth in cervical cancer screening programs for early detection of cancer and precancerous cells. The study informs future studies especially those from low income settings about lessons learned from previous studies and how to be best prepared while planning to implement telehealth for cervical cancer screening. It further identifies the knowledge gaps in the research area and makes recommendations. Using a specified selection criterion, 15 different articles are analyzed based on the study's aim, theory or conceptual framework used, method applied, study findings and conclusion. Results are then tabulated and presented thematically to better inform readers about emerging facts on barriers and facilitators to telehealth implementation as documented in the reviewed articles, and how they consequently lead to evidence informed conclusions that are relevant to telehealth implementation for cervical cancer screening. Preliminary findings of this study underscore that use of low cost mobile colposcope is an appealing option in cervical cancer screening, particularly when coupled with onsite treatment of suspicious lesions. These tools relay cervical images to the online databases for storage and retrieval, they permit integration of connected devices at the point of care to rapidly collect clinical data for further analysis of the prevalence of cervical dysplasia and cervical cancer. Results however reveal the need for population sensitization prior to use of mobile colposcopies among patients, standardization of mobile colposcopy programs across screening partners, sufficient logistics and good connectivity, experienced experts to review image cases at the point-of-care as important facilitators to the implementation of mobile colposcope as a telehealth cervical cancer screening mechanism.

Keywords : cervical cancer screening, digital technology, hand-held colposcopy, knowledge-sharing

Conference Title : ICTT 2017 : International Conference on Telehealth and Telenursing

Conference Location : Singapore, Singapore

Conference Dates : January 08-09, 2017