

Cervical cancer screening in Moldova : recent advances

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Background and aims

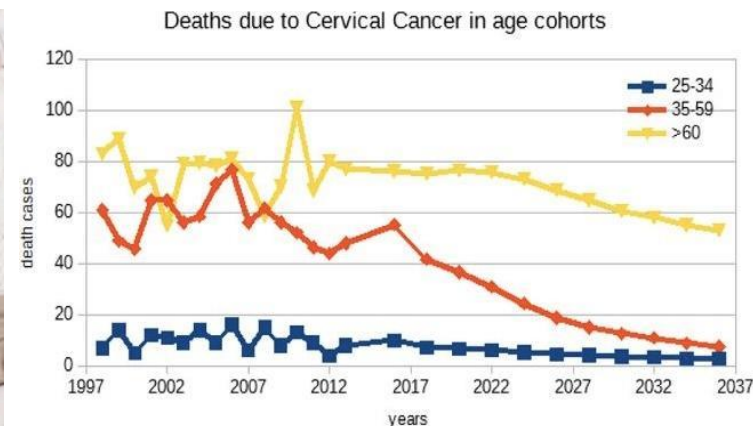
Cervical cancer incidence and mortality rates are very high in Moldova compared to the rest of Europe. The Royal College of Pathologists was asked in 2016 by the Cervical Cancer Prevention Association and Ministry of Health in Moldova to collaborate with implementation of a Moldovan cervical screening programme.

Recent developments

- A Cervical Screening Implementation Unit and Reference Centre for Colposcopy have been established in Moldova.
- Dr Michael Coutts has been working with other pathology professionals from the UK developing cervical screening.
- They have delivered workshops and webinars to the majority of Moldovan pathologists working in the state sector.
- Plans are being made to welcome more Moldovan pathologists to England to further improve practice.
- During the Moldovan Cervical Cancer Prevention Week in 2022, public information actions were carried out such as “Stay healthy. Do the PAP test”.
- Statistics show that the share of women who have had the cytology screening test has increased from 36% in 2021 to 62% in 2023.
- More cases of cervical cancer are being detected early at stages one and two.
- Currently 62% of girls have received human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination by age 15 years.

Images:

1. Michael Coutts (facing camera) teaching pathologists in a workshop on cervical cancer screening in May 2024.
2. A poster during cervical cancer prevention week 2022, reads: “The health of women is important during the pandemic. Take the cytology test in safety “.
3. Selected data till 2016 and projected to 2037 on cervical cancer deaths in age cohorts from the Institute of Oncology and Statistics Moldova.



Outcome and benefits.

- The Royal College of Pathologists, International Cervical Cancer Prevention Association, British Association for Cytopathology, UK Institute of Biomedical Science and Italian Society of Pathology and Cytopathology are collaborating successfully to strengthen Moldovan cervical cancer screening pathology services.
- Moldova should achieve WHO cervical cancer elimination targets for 2030 : that is 70% of women are screened with a high performance test by age 35 and 45 years and 90% of girls are fully vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by age of 15 years.
- HPV vaccination together with cervical screening have the potential to reduce mortality by more than 80%.

