



National Institute for Public Health
and the Environment
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

Self-sampling implementation

Example from the Netherlands

Kim Vos
Dutch cervical cancer screening programme



Content

- 1 Introduction to self-sampling
- 2 Lessons learned
- 3 Self sampling as of mid 2023
- 4 Implementation strategy



Introduction of self sampling

- Available since January 2017
- Opt-in system
- *"If you are uncomfortable or scared to get a pap smear, and this is reason for you to not participate, you can request a self-sampling-kit."*
- More info in the reminder letter

bevolkingsonderzoek



Voor vroegge opsporing van kanker

Bevolkingsonderzoek Zuid
t 088 00 01 344
contact@bevolkingsonderzoekzuid.nl
www.bevolkingsonderzoekzuid.nl

Retouradres: Postbus 690, 5600 AR Eindhoven

J. Doe
Teststraat 9
1111 XX MAASTRICHT



Rix: Invitation for screening for cervical cancer

Dear Ms Doe,

We are writing to invite you to be screened for cervical cancer. You have received this invitation, because cervical cancer occurs most frequently in women between 30 and 60 years of age. Screening enables us to discover at an early stage whether you have cervical cancer or a preliminary stage of it. Early detection makes it possible to treat cervical cancer better or even to prevent it from developing. There is no charge for taking part in the screening programme.

What happens during the screening?

Your family doctor or doctor's receptionist will perform a smear test. The smear will be tested for the human papilloma virus (HPV). Has HPV been detected in the smear? In that case, we will also check immediately whether there are abnormal cells in the smear.

HPV is the virus that may cause cervical cancer in the long term. The body is nearly always able to remove the virus on its own. Sometimes, it does not succeed in this. In that case, abnormal cells may develop. This may result in cervical cancer after a long time. From 2017 onwards, an updated type of screening for cervical cancer will be used.

Would you like to participate?

Whether you participate or not is for you to decide. The screening has advantages and disadvantages. This brochure will help you to make a decision.

- If you wish to participate, please make an appointment for a smear test at your family doctor or the doctor's receptionist.
- Bring this letter with you to the appointment. The stickers on the letter are required for the examination.
- Do you feel very uncomfortable having a smear test performed? And, is this a reason for you not to participate in the screening? Then, read more on the self-sampling device at www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl
- If you do not wish to participate, for example because you are pregnant, please pass this information on at Mijn Bevolkingsonderzoek at www.bevolkingsonderzoekzuid.nl by using your DigID. You can also call us or send us an e-mail.

More information

For more information, read the brochure or visit www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl. You can also ask questions to Bevolkingsonderzoek Zuid. Please call 088-0001333 or send an e-mail to contact@bevolkingsonderzoekzuid.nl.

Yours sincerely,

Drs. M.J.P. Steinhilber

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Lessons learned

1. Clients don't always behave as planned
2. Results from research and practice may differ
3. You cannot find an explanation for everything
4. Be conscious in the choices you make for the laboratory process
5. A good tender is very important



Self sampling as of mid 2023

- > 35-60 years:
 - self-sampling and clinician taken samples equivalently offered in invitation
 - reminder letter will include self-sampling set
- > 30 years:
 - advance notice
 - invitation will include self-sampling set
 - possible to have a clinician taken sample



Implementation strategy

- Decision making
- Be prepared
 - Listen & decide
 - Know your 'why'
- Practical issues
- Embrace the bottlenecks
 - Be aware of increasing complexity
 - Keep the costs in mind



Decision making

be prepared / listen & decide / know your 'why'

- A solid information base was essential in advising the Ministry of Health and running the tenders
- But... there is always more information in the future
- There are many opinions and interests and they can be conflicting
- have a clear goal in mind



Practical issues

bottlenecks / increasing complexity / costs

- Be prepared for seemingly unsolvable challenges
 - reaching the hard to reach
 - validation of self-sampling
 - lower sensitivity of self-sampling
 - loss to follow up
- It gets complicated
 - more changes besides self sampling
 - can professionals keep up?
 - vaccination and screening are moving closer together
- Talk about money

