
January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month



[Cervical cancer](#) was once a leading cause of cancer death for women in the United States. Today, screening and prevention have greatly reduced the impact of this form of cancer. Still, approximately 13,960 women in the United States are projected to receive a diagnosis of cervical cancer in 2023 and approximately 4,310 will die from the disease, [according to the National Cancer Institute](#).

Increasing screening and prevention are key components of the effort to eradicate cervical cancer. Since almost all cases of the disease are caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) infection, vaccines that protect against the virus could prevent the vast majority of cases. Moreover, regular Pap tests can catch – and lead to the treatment of – the disease at the precancerous stage.

Cervical cancer is among a number of cancers that can be caused by infections with pathogens – bacteria, viruses, and parasites.

The Latest On Cervical Cancer

National guidelines say that most women can stop screening for cervical cancer at age 65. However, a study published in the AACR's journal *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention* suggested that if cervical cancer is found in women who are past the age of regular screening, the cancer is more likely to be found at a later stage of the disease. AACR's *Cancer Today* magazine reported on the study and what it means for older women: [Cervical Cancer Found at Later Stages after 65](#).

The AACR blog, *Cancer Research Catalyst*, rounded up developments in cervical cancer in an item published in January 2023: Cervical Cancer: [A Cautionary Tale of Optimism and Challenges](#).

In the United States, where regular cervical cancer screening is common, the disease is usually caught and treated in the precancer stage. But in low-income countries, where screening is sporadic, cervical cancer is often unchecked until it has progressed to an advanced stage.

What The AACR Is Doing In The Area Of Cervical Cancer Research

The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) is currently supporting three scientific grants in this area, two under the Beginning Investigator Grant for Catalytic Research (BIG Cat) Initiative and one through the Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers Career Development Award, in Partnership with Pelotonia & AACR.

The BIG Cat grantees are:

- Abram Kamiza, PhD, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa, who is studying "Evolving genetic factors for cervical cancer in women of African ancestry."
- Imran O. Morhason-Bello, MD, PhD, a senior lecturer and consultant gynecologist at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, who is researching "Epigenetic biomarkers of anal HPV Infection in women with cervical HPV."

The researcher supported by Victoria's Secret Global Fund for Women's Cancers Career Development Award, in Partnership with Pelotonia & AACR, is Chemtai Mungo, MD, MPH, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who is studying "Feasibility of adjuvant topical therapy for cervical precancer treatment."

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