

SECTION 2
the irish cervical
screening programme



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ICSP KEY FACTS

The key pathway providers of the ICSP involve:

1. Primary Care Smeartakers
2. Laboratory (cytology and histology)
3. Colposcopy

The ICSP Office provides coordination for the many facets of the ICSP pathway of care including:

- Health Promotion
- Population Database
- Smearmaker Coordination
- Laboratory Coordination
- Quality

The main tool for the management of the ICSP is a population database called the Cervical Screening Register (CSR).

Aim

To reduce the incidence of and mortality from cervical cancer in Ireland.

Eligible population (policy)

Women aged 25-60 years

Screening interval (policy)

Women having their first smear will have it repeated in one year. Subsequent smears will be carried out at 5 yearly intervals

Target coverage

Minimum 80% coverage of the eligible population

Location

Cervical screening is based in primary care. Participating smearmakers are required to register with the programme

2.1 Key Responsibilities Of The ICSP

- To ensure that eligible women on the register are invited for cervical screening
- To ensure that call and recall letters are sent out at the appropriate times
- To notify women of their results
- To ensure that attempts are made to contact women requiring further investigation and that such attempts are recorded
- To ensure that smears with a "not normal" result are followed up and outcomes recorded
- To pay smearmakers for participation in screening programme in accordance with policy
- To set quality target standards and monitor achievement
- To operate failsafe procedures
- To provide equipment for smear taking
- To provide training for new / inexperienced smearmakers
- To provide training and education opportunities for experienced smearmakers
- To keep smearmakers informed of progress of the ICSP

2.2 Awareness Raising

Women can be informed about the programme by a variety of channels, such as leaflets in primary care facilities, Family Planning clinics, Womens' Health services, pharmacies, the ICSP website (www.icsp.ie), community development initiatives, health promotion and marketing strategies.

2.3 Registration Of Women

2.3.1 Eligible Population

- The eligible population (women aged 25-60 years) in Ireland is estimated to be just under one million
- The CSR population database has been compiled, principally from data from the Department of Community Family and Social Affairs. This data has been standardised and duplications removed
- It is expected that this process of establishment will be duplicated for the rest of Ireland
- The register is regularly updated to include women as they become eligible

2.3.2 Self-Registration

- Women are encouraged to register themselves to ensure that the CSR details for each individual is complete and accurate
- Self-registration is achieved in a variety of ways: by telephone, through the website or by the woman's completion of a self-registration leaflet available from a variety of community outlets

2.4 The ICSP / Women Communication Processes

2.4.1 Call Invitation

- Women aged 25-60 years, who are registered with the Programme, will receive their first invitation by letter to attend at an ICSP-registered smeartaker of their choice, for free cervical screening
- Within the eligible population, the ICSP process will initially call those in the last year of each 5 yearly cohort between the ages of 25-55 and from each year in the cohort of women aged 55-60
- Women are usually called around their birthday
- Two reminder letters are sent after each invitation if the woman does not have a laboratory smear notification received by the ICSP
- Women who self refer to an ICSP smeartaker for their first programme-entry smear are facilitated to enter the programme at the discretion of the smeartaker

2.4.2 Normal Results

- The doctor with clinical responsibility will receive a copy of the result from the laboratory
- A letter informing of a 'no abnormality detected' result will be sent to the woman by the ICSP office
- The ICSP letter will indicate when she should have her next smear according to the laboratory recommendation
- This laboratory recommendation is calculated on the basis of the smear test result and the clinical information provided
- A further call letter will be sent to the woman from the ICSP office when her next smear is due

- A report is sent simultaneously to the ICSP and the smearer by the laboratory
- The ICSP letter with a supporting leaflet, advises the woman her smear 'has been reported as inadequate or unsatisfactory' and to re-attend her smearer for a further smear.
- Two reminder letters are sent to the woman if the ICSP has not received a further smear notification

- A “not normal” result is sent to the doctor with clinical responsibility
- A woman whose smear is not normal receives a letter advising her ‘smear has been reported as needing follow-up’ and to contact her doctor for further information
- The clinically responsible doctor is responsible for taking appropriate action
- In the event of the woman failing to attend for follow-up, a ICSP failsafe letter is sent to the woman and her doctor twice

Figure 10: ICSP Flow Chart 2001



2.5 Quality

The Programme is fully committed to quality in the entire screening pathway. This is reflected in the following documents:

- Women's Charter (Appendix 1)
- Quality Policy Statement (Appendix 2)
- Quality Assurance Targets for Smeartakers (Appendix 3)

Smeartakers are expected to meet the ICSP Quality Assurance standards.

2.6 Registered Smeartakers

Smeartakers (GP and Practice Nurses) who wish to participate in the screening programme must register with the ICSP. Refer 6.3.1. about the specific of registration requirements and payment for smears.

2.7 Unique Individual Identifiers

2.7.1 The Woman

- The Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) is required. All smeartakers are required to obtain this number for all ICSP communications. The ICSP office can assist if the woman does not know her PPSN
- For women who do not have a PPSN, the ICSP will provide a CSP identification number upon smeartaker request

2.7.2 The Smeartaker

- If the smeartaker is a GP, the number used is the Medical Council registration number
- If the smeartaker is a Practice Nurse, the number is the An Bord Altranais Personal Identification Number (PIN)
- The GP is assigned a payee number for payment purposes