“HPV is the nicer name for genital warts”

Beliefs, misconceptions, unanswered questions and factors influencing information needs among women who have a HPV test within routine follow-up

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Background: HPV testing is increasingly being incorporated into cervical screening programmes. To inform development of information materials, better understanding is needed of information needs of women tested in routine clinical practice.

Aims: To (a) explore beliefs about HPV; (b) identify common unanswered questions; and (c) identify factors influencing information needs.

Design  Qualitative study involving in-depth interviews.

Subjects: 27 women who had undergone HPV tests as part of routine follow-up for abnormal smears/CIN at a colposcopy clinic in a large teaching hospital; both HPV-positive and HPV-negative.

Analysis: Interviews recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analysed using framework approach.
Beliefs, misconceptions & unanswered questions

Beliefs & misconceptions

1. unaware of HPV cervical cancer link
2. colposcopy clinic info focussed on cell changes

Unanswered questions

- transmission
- symptoms
- prevention & treatment
- consequences
- HPV test itself
Information needs & conclusions
Factors influencing women’s information needs

Conclusions
Women have significant unmet information needs around HPV, but “one size” will not fit all.