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the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
for the National Cervical Screening Program**

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Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AMBS 2004	Australian Modified Bethesda System 2004
ARIA	Accessibility/Remoteness Index for Australia
ASGC	Australian Standard Geographical Classification
AS rate	age-standardised rate
AS rate (A)	age-standardised rate, standardised to the Australian 2001 Population
AS rate (W)	age-standardised rate, standardised to the (WHO) World Standard Population
CD	census Collection District
CI	confidence interval (see Appendix C)
CIN	cervical intraepithelial neoplasia
DoHA	Department of Health and Ageing
ERP	estimated resident population
HPV	human papillomavirus
ICD	International Classification of Diseases
NCSP	National Cervical Screening Program
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
Pap	Papanicolaou
Qld	Queensland
SA	South Australia
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Index for Areas
SES	socioeconomic status
Tas	Tasmania
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia
WHO	World Health Organization

Summary

The National Cervical Screening Program is a joint program of the Australian Government and state and territory governments. The main objective of the Program is to reduce incidence and mortality from cervical cancer through organised cervical screening. The target age group is women aged 20–69 years.

Cervical screening in Australia 2006–2007 is the 11th annual report on key program activity, performance and outcome indicators to monitor the achievements of the National Cervical Screening Program. This report, a comprehensive national picture of cervical screening in Australia for 2006–2007, combines data provided by state and territory cervical screening programs, as well as data sourced from the National Cancer Statistics Clearing House and the AIHW Mortality Database. It presents the most recent information on the six Program performance indicators that cover participation in cervical screening, rate of early re-screening, low- and high-grade abnormality detection, and incidence and mortality of cervical cancer.

Participation in cervical screening

The number of women 20–69 years participating in cervical screening in Australia increased from 2,563,107* in 1996–1997, when reporting commenced, to 3,549,524 in 2006–2007.

Two-year participation in 2006–2007 was 61.5% for women aged 20–69 years. This is the highest participation has been since it peaked at 63.4% in 1998–1999. Higher participation in cervical screening means that more women with pre-cancerous abnormalities can be detected and managed before progression to cervical cancer, thus reducing incidence and mortality.

Three-year participation for 2005–2007 was 74.0% and 5-year participation for 2003–2007 was 86.4% for women aged 20–69 years, indicating that Australia has comparable participation rates to international cervical screening programs.

Compliance with recommended screening interval

The proportion of women who were re-screened early following a normal Pap test has continued to decline from 32.0% in a cohort of women from 1999 to 23.1% in a cohort of women from 2006. This trend indicates greater compliance with the recommend screening interval of 2 years, which is important for maintaining the cost-effectiveness of the Program.

Detection of abnormalities

The detection of high-grade abnormalities by histology in women aged 20–69 years was 7.0 per 1,000 women screened in 2007, lower than the 2006 rate of 7.3. Most high-grade abnormalities were detected in women aged 20–34 years.

Incidence and mortality of cervical cancer

Incidence and mortality of cervical cancer in Australia remain low, consistent with the Program's aim to reduce incidence and mortality. There were 9.2 new cases per 100,000 women in 2005, and 1.9 deaths per 100,000 women in 2006 (aged 20–69 years). Incidence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women has been estimated to be more than double (ABS & AIHW 2008), and mortality found to be five times that of other Australian women.

* Note that this figure does not include women screened by the Queensland program.

Summary trend comparison table for national data for women 20–69 years

Indicator	Current reporting period		Previous reporting period		Reporting commencement	
	Year(s)		Year(s)		Year(s)	
Participation in 2-year period (per cent) (age-standardised rate)	2006–2007	61.5	2005–2006	60.6	1996–1997	61.0
Participation in 3-year period (per cent) (age-standardised rate)	2005–2007	74.0	2004–2006	73.1	2004–2006	73.1
Participation in 5-year period (per cent) (age-standardised rate)	2003–2007	86.4	2002–2006	85.9	2002–2006	85.9
Early re-screening within 21 months of normal Pap test ^(a) (per cent)	2006	23.1	2005	24.4	1999 ^(a)	32.0
Ratio of low-grade to high-grade abnormalities	2007	0.95	2006	1.05	1997	1.47
High-grade abnormalities per 1,000 women screened (age-standardised rate)	2007	7.0	2006	7.3	1997	6.4
Incidence of cervical cancer per 100,000 women (age-standardised rate)	2005	9.2	2004	9.0	1997	11.4
Mortality from cervical cancer per 100,000 women (age-standardised rate)	2006	1.9	2005	2.0	1997	3.0

(a) From 1996–1998 the indicator reported on a 2-year period following a normal Pap test; in 1999, the indicator was changed to a 21-month interval, hence 1999 is the earliest year for which data are available for comparison.

Note: The New South Wales Pap test register commenced in July 1996; therefore data have been estimated for the period January to July 1996. The Queensland Health Pap smear register began operations in February 1999; therefore no data are available for the 1996–1997 reporting period. The Northern Territory Pap test register commenced in March 1996, therefore data have been estimated for the period January to March 1996.