



REPUBLIC OF PERU
NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR GYNECOLOGICAL CANCER PREVENTION

How Can We Prevent Cervical Cancer?



A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY FACILITATORS



Introduction

The community facilitators' guide, *How Can We Prevent Cervical Cancer?* was developed for use by community promotion teams as part of a cervical cancer prevention program in San Martín, Peru. While the guide was developed for use in Peru, the core messages and teaching strategies are relevant in a variety of settings. This English translation of the guide is intended to make the information accessible to a wider audience. We invite you to adapt the modules for use in other settings.

TATI PROJECT

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Guía para Facilitadoras de la Comunidad

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TATI Project



Preface

The TATI Project (the Spanish acronym for *Tamizaje y Tratamiento Inmediato de Lesiones Cervicouterinas*, or Screening and Immediate Treatment for Cervical Lesions) is the result of coordinated efforts among the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH) and the Peruvian Ministry of Health (MINSA), working together on an intensive intervention targeting San Martín's Regional Health Department's jurisdiction as part of the National Plan for Gynecological Cancer Prevention.

The Pan American Health Organization is an international organization specializing in health that also serves as the Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization. Its mission is to give technical assistance to member countries and foster collaboration among them in order to maintain healthy environments and promote sustainable human development, to ultimately achieve health for all and by all in the Americas.

PATH (Program for Appropriate Technology in Health) is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization. Its mission is to improve health, especially among women and children in developing countries. PAHO and PATH belong to the Alliance for Cervical Cancer Prevention (ACCP), which receives funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Alliance is a group of five international organizations whose common goal is the prevention of cervical cancer in developing countries.



The TATI Project objective is to implement the National Program of Gynecological Cancer Prevention, detecting and treating precursor lesions to cervical cancer, in order to decrease the incidence and mortality associated with this type of cancer. The project targets women at greatest risk (25 to 49 years of age) who present precancerous lesions. As part of the project, this age group of women is offered the necessary information and education to enable them to seek out and request the service voluntarily.

This guide is aimed at community health trainers and contains seven modules. The first module: **Learning About My Body**, provides knowledge about women's sexual organs and how to care for them; the second module: **Vaginal Infections**, deals with vaginal secretions and genital organ infections; the third module: **Cervical Cancer**, focuses on what causes the illness and how to prevent it; the fourth module: **Self-Esteem**, discusses the influence of self-love, individual decision-making about one's own health and the beliefs and fears that go along with that; the fifth module: **Support Group Formation and Monitoring**, provides tools to organize Support Groups with Health Clinics and create a plan of activities to reach target goals in each community; the sixth module: **Raising Awareness about Cervical Cancer Prevention**, offers tools for developing awareness-raising sessions; and the seventh module about **Home Visits**, offers guidance on how to carry out a home visit for each of the cases presented. Participatory methodology is used throughout the manual, which makes teaching and learning more interesting. High quality screening services for women provide them with a good experience, and also guarantee that they will share their experiences with other women, helping them to understand the importance of having regular screening themselves.



This training material can be improved through experience gained over time. In the modules, the idea is to first discover the knowledge women themselves already have, and then to discuss new and different aspects of each topic with them. Using this method, the hope is that women will use the new knowledge acquired to make decisions about their health care in the future.

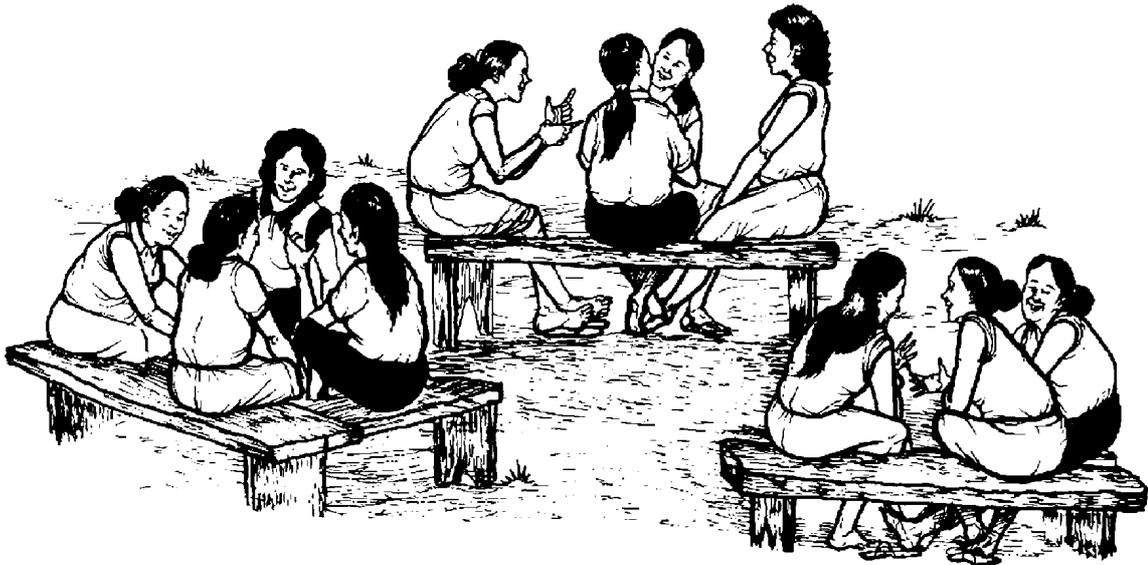


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HOW TO PLAN A WORKSHOP?



To carry out a workshop, the following elements are needed:

▶ **ENVIRONMENT OF TRUST.** A trusting environment must be created to promote communication among the participants. To achieve this environment, some group exercises can be used so that participants feel confident about themselves and the group. These exercises may be for introducing one another, motivation, group formation, communication and evaluation; the chapter titled *GROUP EXERCISES/GAMES* contains descriptions of quite a few of these.

▶ **WORKSHOP RULES.** There should be a discussion with workshop participants about the establishment of rules, mainly to ensure a pleasant atmosphere and mutual respect.

Ask participants to suggest some rules; if they do not suggest any, the following can be offered:



- Participation is voluntary.
- Make sure all criticism is constructive.
- The established schedule should be followed (Be on time).
- Listen to the person who is speaking and respect their ideas.
- Respect all the participants' opinions.
- Everyone should be willing to change.

▶ **THE GOAL** of the activity is for the group to discover important concepts, share in discussions and exchange ideas.

▶ **CHARACTERISTICS OF A FACILITATOR:**

- Knows how to listen.
- Knows how to ask.
- Knows how to motivate a group to express itself freely.
- Respects people's lifestyles and culture.
- Is tolerant (patient).
- Speaks clearly and simply.
- Creates a trusting environment.
- Does not favor one participant over another.
- Knows how to communicate through body language.

▶ **THE EDUCATIONAL SESSION.** The educational session is a technique that is used in teaching adult education. It fosters analysis, dialogue, thinking and discussion about an identified topic or theme.

STAGES OF AN EDUCATIONAL SESSION

- 1. Preparation:** This is the stage before the actual session when you prepare topics (by reading the guide), make and/or organize the materials that will be used during the workshop, decide on the physical space where the workshop will be held, and confirm the women's attendance (by inviting/coordinating with Mother's Clubs).



- 2. Starting the Meeting:** the trainer introduces herself, greets the participants warmly, and organizes the group exercise on introductions to break the ice and so the participants can get to know each other better.
- 3. Teaching Moment:** this is the stage where participants' knowledge is shared and new information is given, sometimes using pictures. At this point some descriptive questions are asked, such as: "What do you see in this picture?"; then, the analysis questions are asked, like: "What does this picture mean to you?" and finally, the projection questions, for example, "How do you fit into this picture?" The order of these different types of questions should be maintained as given here, and not changed by the trainers.
- 4. Evaluation:** at this time we need to make sure that the messages are being understood clearly by the participants, and that they are comprehending them as we thought they would. A series of group exercises (games) are utilized for the evaluation.
- 5. Commitment:** all learning should create behavior change in people, and the adoption of healthy practices to improve their lives. This is the moment when the participants make a commitment regarding the topic covered, so that what they learned will be practiced and shared with others.
- 6. Closing/Goodbye:** summarize the material covered, announce the next topic, and agree upon the date for the next meeting with the participants.



MODULE I

Learning About My Body

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE IN THIS MEETING?

1. Women will learn about their internal and external sexual organs.
2. Women will know how to care for their sexual organs.

WHAT DO WE NEED FOR THIS MEETING?

- Pictures of fruits: apples, bananas, oranges and pears, to form the groups.
- Two puzzles or illustrations of the external female sexual organs.
- Two puzzles or illustrations of the internal female sexual organs.
- Poster paper and markers.
- Drawings or illustrations of women:
 - Washing themselves
 - Having the screening test done
 - Visiting the health clinic.



WELCOME



To make the meeting pleasant and gain the women's trust:

- Greet them warmly and thank them for participating.
- Make sure that they all feel comfortable.
- Speak to them confidently about the topic: what our sexual organs are like and how to care for them.



INTRODUCTIONS OR MOTIVATIONAL EXERCISE



“Looking for your other half”

For this exercise, all the participants form a circle and each is given a card with half a picture on it. Then ask them to find the person that has the other half of the picture. These two people have to introduce each other to the group, finding out not only the name and age of the person but other personal details. Afterwards, each participant introduces the other to the group.

The Cow

In this exercise, everyone gets into a circle and sings a song together, copying the actions as the trainer demonstrates them:

There once was a fat and flirtatious cow

From eating so much hay, her foot ended up this way
(action with foot)

There once was a fat and flirtatious cow

From eating so much hay, her ears ended up this way
(action with hands on ears)

..... (her belly ended up this way)

..... (her mouth ended up this way)

..... (her eyes ended up this way)

After the exercise, ask them: What did you feel?

Listen attentively to their answers and motivate them to share and interact in many moments like this during the course of the meeting.



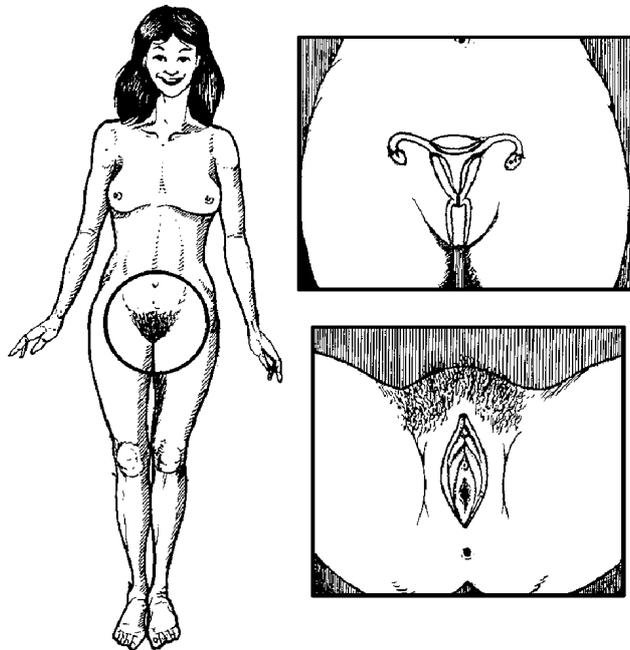
STEP

1

WOMEN LEARN ABOUT THEIR ORGANS FOR HAVING SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS AND HAVING CHILDREN

SHARING PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

ALL TOGETHER



Show them a drawing or illustration of a woman's body, with a big circle indicating the area where the sexual and reproductive organs are located, then ask them: What do you see in the picture? What do you think is under this circle? With the answers they give, make two lists: one of the external organs mentioned and one of the internal organs mentioned.

After listening to the responses and reinforcing the ideas presented, say: all of us women have these organs and they allow us to have sexual relations and to have children and they occupy this part of our body (point to the pelvic area of your body).



In groups

Then ask them: Why do you think I wrote these in two columns? Highlight the correct answers, then say: of all the parts mentioned, some of them are found in plain view and we can touch them, these are the external organs and others are found inside and we cannot see or touch them, these are the internal organs. Now we are going to learn more about these parts.



Form four groups of participants using the cards with pictures of fruit on them: apples, pears, bananas, oranges (See the chapter *GROUP EXERCISES/GAMES*).

Hand the two puzzles of the external sexual organs to two of the groups and the two puzzles with the internal sexual organs to the other two groups. Each group must name the organs, describe their function and put the puzzle together.

Ask each group to choose a representative to explain to the rest of the women what their group did. If you see that some group seems to have trouble putting the puzzle together, encourage them to do as much as they can.

When the groups have finished the puzzles, invite the representatives from each group to name the organs, showing the completed puzzle.



BUILDING NEW KNOWLEDGE

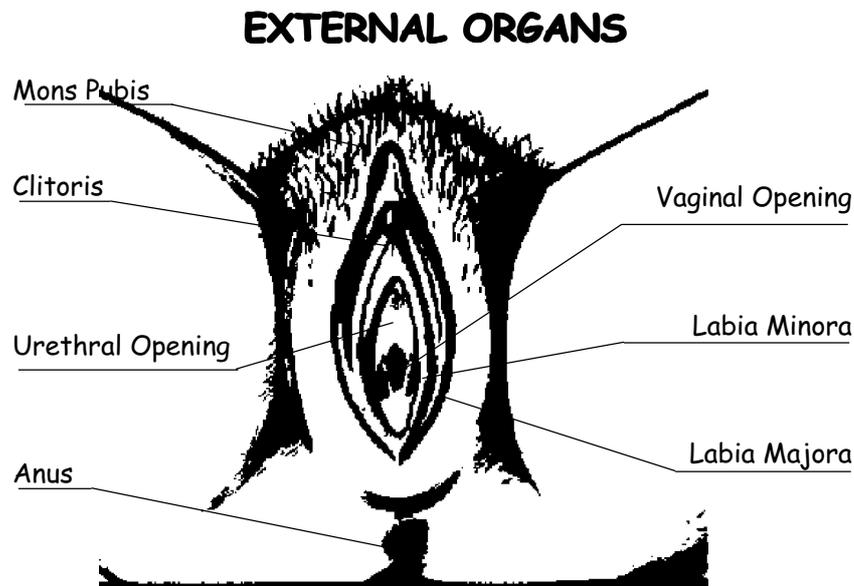
ALL TOGETHER



When all the groups have finished explaining their work, repeat what the women have said and, if necessary, add information. With the help of the puzzles, use the names women commonly use for these organs, and also the names that are used at the health clinic.



We can touch and see the organs that are outside our body. These are:



Mons Pubis: this is an area of fatty tissue which is covered with hair or fuzz.

Clitoris: this is a small fleshy spot, about the size of a peanut, and it has the shape of a bird's tongue, it is very sensitive and it is where the inner labia ("lips") are joined. When this part of our body is caressed, we feel a very pleasant sensation.

Urethral Opening: this is the opening where we urinate (pee) and it is located below the clitoris.

Vaginal Opening: this is where menstrual blood comes out of, where the man's penis enters during sexual relations, and where the newborn baby comes out during the birth.

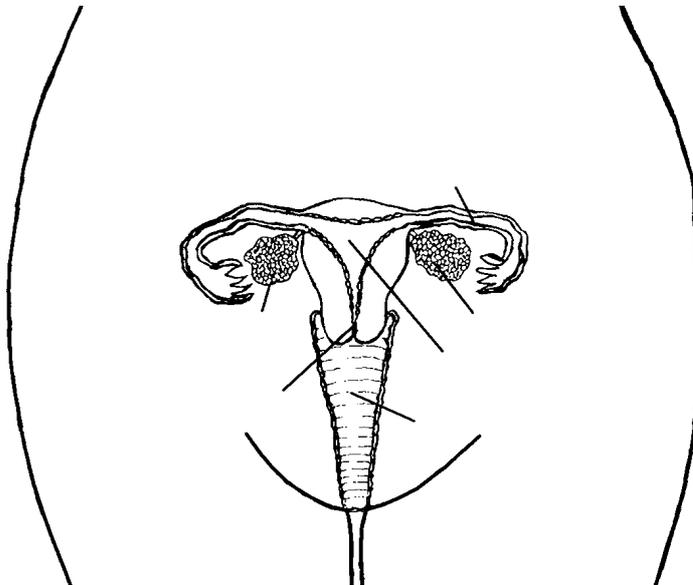
Labia Majora and Labia Minora: these are the fleshy folds that surround and protect the entrance to the vagina.



Anus: this is the opening where the bowel ends (poop comes out). Because it is very close to the entrance to the vagina, it is important to be careful when wiping and washing.

Then explain the organs that are inside the woman's body, showing the puzzles again.

INTERNAL ORGANS



Vagina: it is like a tube that measures 7 or 8 centimeters and is located below the uterus or womb. When it is resting its walls are together; it opens and expands to fulfill the following functions:

- so that the penis can enter during sexual relations;
- when the baby comes out during childbirth;
- when the blood comes out during menstruation, and
- so that the doctor or midwife can place an instrument called a speculum inside and see if we are pregnant or to find out if the cervix has some infection or abnormality.



Uterus or womb: has the shape of a pear. It is connected to the vagina by an opening that is called the cervix, which is shaped like a small pig's nose. This part, the cervix, is what is looked at to detect infections or *cervical cancer*.

The inside of the uterus becomes covered with a lining of blood and mucus every month. This lining is what feeds the fetus when there is a pregnancy, or what comes out during menstruation when there is no pregnancy.

Fallopian Tubes: these are like two thin tubes that connect the uterus to the ovaries. They provide the ovum or egg from the woman with a pathway from the ovaries where the man's seed (sperm) can then join with the woman's egg. This is when fertilization happens.

Ovaries: they are the size of a dried Lima bean and they are near the Fallopian tubes on either side of the uterus. Each month, one of the ovaries matures and one ovum or egg from the woman leaves and travels through the Fallopian tube to meet up with the male seed. If this does not happen, the egg dies and dissolves.

Different from other organs in our bodies, the internal sexual organs are not stuck together but held by ligaments.

To reinforce the information, place the pictures of the internal and external sexual organs in view with arrows pointing to the different organs. Using cards with the names of the organs, the women should place the correct card next to each arrow.

As each woman participates the messages will be reinforced with the participation of the whole group.

**STEP****2****WOMEN KNOWING HOW TO CARE FOR
THEIR SEXUAL ORGANS****SHARING PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE****ALL TOGETHER**

Ask them:

What do you do to take care of your sexual organs and keep them healthy?

Give them a short period of time to think, and while they do that take advantage of the time to tape the poster-sized paper to the wall.

Listen to the women and write what they say on the poster paper. After each idea, place the corresponding figure (image) on the paper; for example, if they say bathing, put a picture of a woman bathing in the river, or if they say having a test done, put an image of a woman having the gynecological test done.

Then, repeat their suggestions on how to take care of their organs, and add others that have not been mentioned yet.



BUILDING NEW KNOWLEDGE

Taking care of external sexual organs:



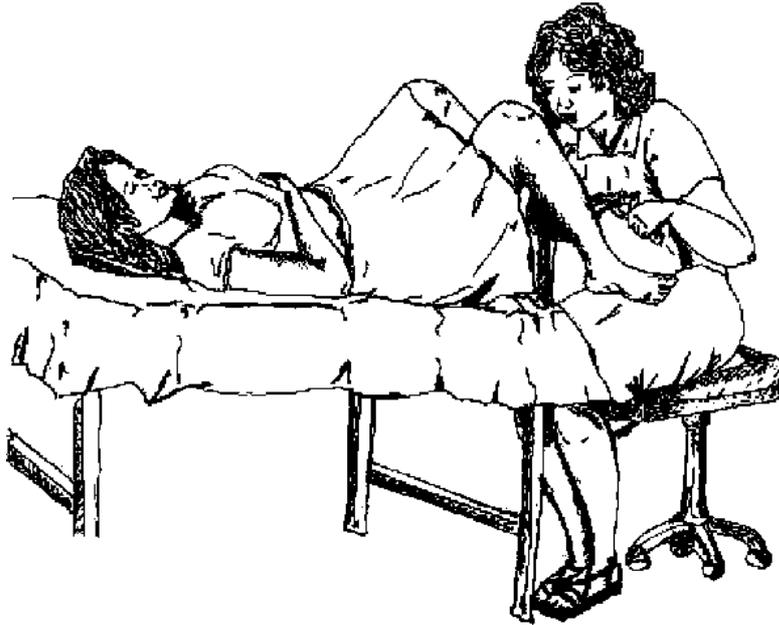
1. As women, we must wash our external sexual organs with soap and water, always being careful not to put soap inside the vagina.

2. Since the anus is near the entrance to the vagina, we must be careful when washing and wiping, because we can get our parts dirty with bits of excrement (poop). That is why you should always wipe front to back, and you should not sit on the basin, but instead use a jar and pour water.

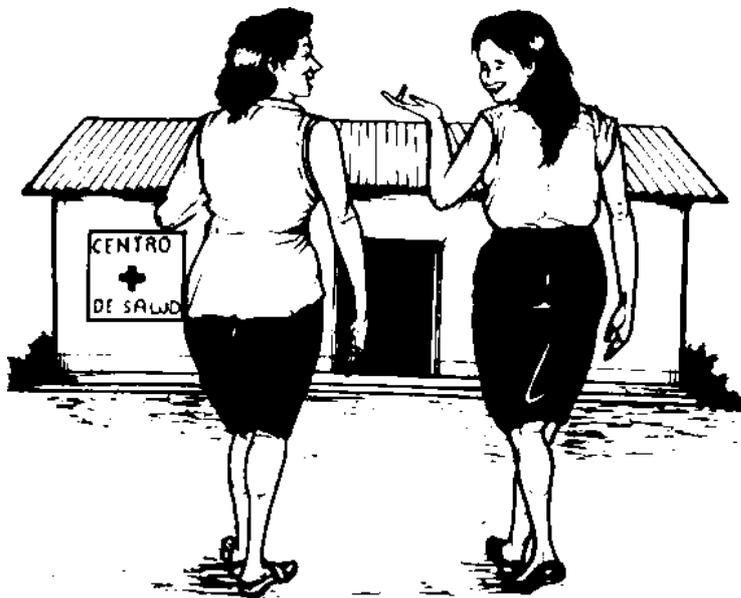




3. We should not wash ourselves inside nor put herbs or plants inside our internal sexual organs, because this changes the humidity and can cause discharge or vaginal secretions.



4. When you have discharge with a bad odor, burning, itching or pain, you should go to a health clinic to be checked.

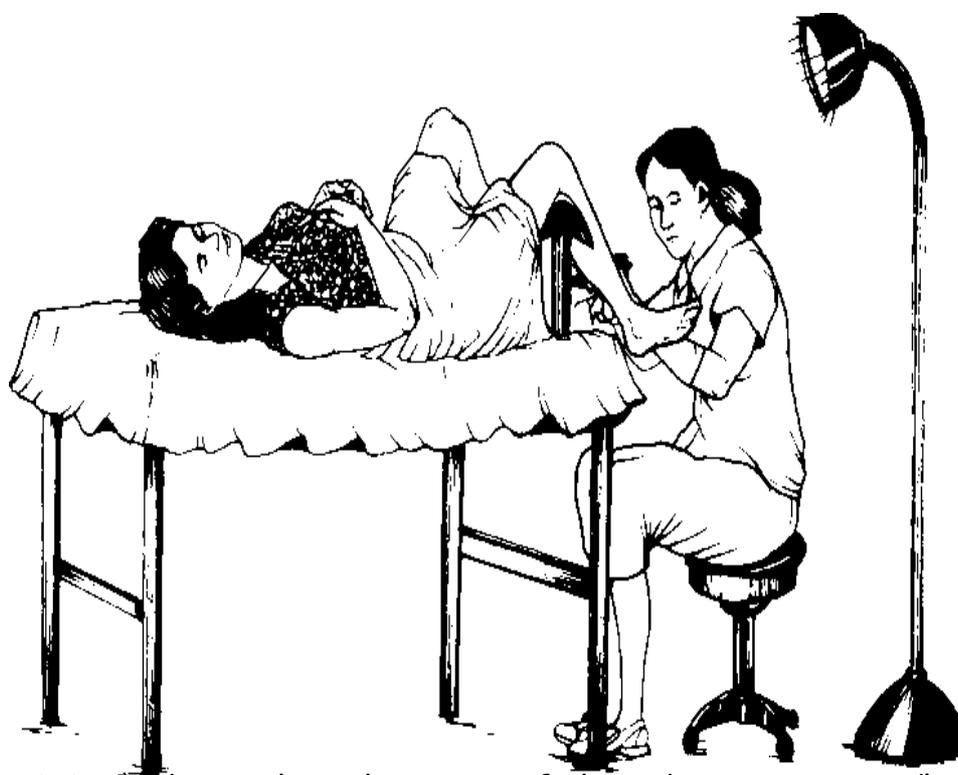




Taking care of internal sexual organs:

If they did not mention the vaginal exam when they talked about ways of taking care of their organs, ask the following question:

What should we women do to know what condition our uterus or womb is in?



Write down what they say. If they do not mention "go get tested", then show a drawing or illustration of a woman who is having the gynecological exam done, and ask them to describe it, to tell us what they see and what it means to them. Then, listen and write down the answers on the poster paper, reinforcing the following idea:

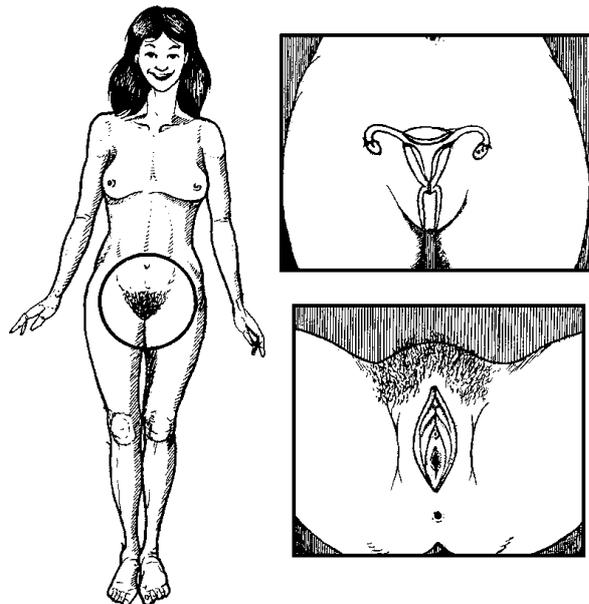
To know what condition our uterus or womb is in, we must go to a health clinic to have a gynecological exam. During the exam, the doctor/midwife looks at the cervix to see if it is normal or if there is some illness, like the beginning of cancer.



EVALUATION

In a large envelope, put pictures of all the female sexual organs; ask each woman to take a picture out of the envelope. Let the participants know that at the next meeting they should introduce themselves as if they were the organ that they chose, saying where they are located and what they are like and what they are used for, but without saying the name of the organ, because the other participants should guess what they are. Give this example: "We are twins, we are located in the face and through us you can see the wonderful things that surround you, Who are we?"

Now we play the game called "burning ball," and the women that lose have to choose one of the cards in the box (See the chapter **GROUP EXERCISES/ GAMES**). The cards have questions to answer, like:



- Which are the woman's internal sexual organs?
- Which are the woman's external sexual organs?
- What is the vagina used for?
- What are the ovaries like and what do they do?
- What does the midwife/doctor look at when they do the gynecological exam?

If the answer is not satisfactory, another woman from the same line should add to it.



COMMITMENTS

Ask the women what things they have learned today that can help them in their daily lives to maintain their health and that they can commit to practicing from now on. For example, by using a small mirror to look at their sexual organs they can learn what they look like), that nothing should be put into the vagina, and we should not douche or wash inside the vagina, or that we should go to a health clinic for a vaginal exam when we feel some discomfort in our private parts.

Write down the commitments made on a poster paper.

CLOSING & GOODBYE

Finally, congratulate the women, thank them for their participation, their patience, and their time, and invite them to attend the next meeting.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO AT THE END OF THE MEETING?

Pick up all the materials we have used and put them away.



MODULE II

Vaginal Infections (discharge)

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE IN THIS MEETING?

- 1.▶ Women will learn the difference between normal wetness in the vagina and abnormal vaginal discharge due to an infection.
- 2.▶ Women will learn why discharge occurs and that these infections do not cause cancer.
- 3.▶ Women will learn that not all discharges are the same.

WHAT DO WE NEED FOR THIS MEETING?

- Little cardboard boxes and a bag to form the groups.
- Poster Paper.
- Images of normal vaginal discharge.
- Drawings of different things that cause infections.



WELCOME



TO MAKE THE MEETING PLEASANT AND GAIN THE WOMEN'S TRUST

- Greet them warmly and congratulate them for participating.
- Make sure that they all feel good about being at the meeting.
- Speak to them confidently about the different diseases that affect women's intimate parts and tell them that in this meeting we will only talk about **vaginal infections**. The topic of "Cervical Cancer" will be discussed at the next meeting.

MOTIVATIONAL EXERCISE:

Laughing and Crying (See "GROUP EXERCISES/GAMES")

Ask the participants to form two lines, facing each other; then tell them that when the trainer shows her fist with the right hand the group on the right has to cry and if she opens the right hand they should laugh. If we do the same motions with the left hand, the group on the left has to cry or laugh. So, the hands will be opening or closing on each side at the same time.

The group that makes most mistakes loses.

**STEP****1****SHARING PREVIOUS
KNOWLEDGE**

ALL TOGETHER



Ask the following question:
What do you know about vaginal infections?

Write the answers on a poster paper.



In groups



By using one of the games (see the *GROUP EXERCISES* chapter), form four groups. Two groups will discuss **what wetness is like in a healthy vagina** and the other two groups will talk about **what wetness is like in a vagina that is infected and has discharge**. Each group has five minutes to talk and three minutes to present their ideas to all the participants.

Listen attentively to each group representative and motivate them to talk about their knowledge.

Repeat what they say and write it on a poster paper.



BUILDING NEW KNOWLEDGE

Assure the participants that it is normal that women have some vaginal secretions, and that the normal wetness helps the vagina function and keeps it healthy, because there are good microorganisms or "bugs" that are very small and help protect from the microbes (bad bugs). Also:

- During the month vaginal secretions (or mucus) change in quantity and in thickness. Some days it is like raw egg white, and other days it is more whitish, or thicker, especially in the days close to the period.

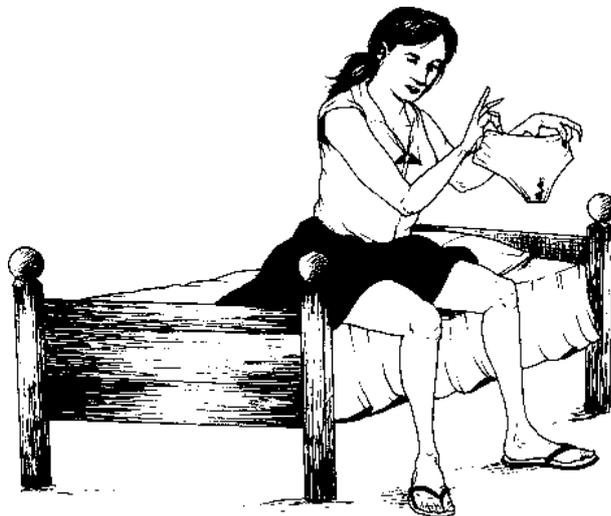




- Secretions increase when we want to have sexual relations (from caresses, being with our partner) and also when we are pregnant.
- Secretions can decrease a lot when we are breastfeeding, and also when we are in the stage of menopause.

Then, going back to what the groups said, and what is written on the poster paper about wetness in a vagina that is infected with discharge; mention that, just like the groups identified, **we know when the vagina is infected when:**

- There are changes in the odor, color, and quantity of our vaginal secretions (discharge).
- When the secretions are white, yellow, or greenish and they wet and stain/mark our underwear.
- When the secretion is like cottage cheese, or smells like rotten fish, or has a very strong acid smell.



All of this can produce burning sensations in our parts, as well as low stomach pains when we urinate or have sex.

**STEP****2****SHARING PREVIOUS
KNOWLEDGE**

ALL TOGETHER

Ask the following question:

**WHY DO YOU THINK WE HAVE INFECTIONS?**

As the women talk about infections, write the causes they mention on the poster paper, taping a picture next to it when there is one that matches, for example:

If they say that infections are contagious, tape a picture or illustration of a couple having sex. And add reasons that were not mentioned.



BUILDING NEW KNOWLEDGE

Besides emphasizing the correct answers, explain the following:

Everything that you women have said about why we have infections is exactly what the women in our community say; that's what they are thinking, and it is not bad to think that way when you do not know the other causes.

However, it is good to know **that we have infections when our defense system in the vagina (the good bugs that protect us called "vaginal flora") gets weak or we kill them, and this happens when one of the good bugs has multiplied too much or one of the bad bugs comes in from outside.**

And how can bad bugs get into our vagina?

Motivate participants to give their opinion. Highlight what they say and then explain:

Bad bugs can come into the vagina several ways:

- When we wash with the same water (explain that we should use running water), and if we do not clean well after pooping (explain that it should always be towards the back).





- When we douche or wash inside (with pumps, vaginal douches). Explain that the vagina does not need to be washed, just like our eyes get cleaned with their own tears and do not need to be washed with soap and water, the vagina has its own wetness and with that it can clean and protect itself.



- When having sex, bad bugs (microbes) can also enter into the vagina on the man's penis, these can be contagious, like the microorganisms of Gonorrhoea or Syphilis.



Continue explaining:

These microbes produce inflammation, which can be in the vagina, in this case it is called vaginitis; or in the cervix, and then it is called cervicitis. These inflammations are what produce infection and discharge.

What should we do when we have an infection?

We should go to a health clinic to have a vaginal exam, and get the correct medicine, depending on what kind of bad bug we have (white, yellow or green discharge, etc.)

It is important to know that not all vaginal infections are cured by the same kind of medicine; that is why we should not use the same medicine that our friend or neighbor used.

As we have seen, the reason women get vaginal infections is that microbial germs (or bad bugs) enter our vagina.

To reinforce the information learned, ask the following question:

If a woman does not get cured when she has a vaginal infection, what problems can she have?

Listen to what they say, then say:

It is good to know that having vaginal infections does not necessarily mean that in the future you will have cancer. Vaginal infections do not turn into cancer.

Cancer is another illness that we will talk about at the next meeting.



EVALUATION

To know if the women have learned, we play the game "burning ball" (See chapter on *GROUP EXERCISES/GAMES*). When the ball gets to a person, they have to answer one of the following questions:

- What is a healthy vagina like?
- How do we know if the vagina is unhealthy?
- Why does the vagina get infections?
- What should we do when the vagina has an infection?

After this, one by one, have the women practice how to explain what they learned to other people.

COMMITMENTS

Before saying goodbye, ask the women what they commit to do for themselves, for example: maintain good hygiene and if they have discomfort go to a health clinic to get a vaginal examination.

Afterwards, ask them if they can commit to talking to other women about what they learned today, so that those other women can also tell the difference between normal discharge and discharge that is not normal, and also know what to do to get better.

Finally, ask: Who commits to washing their intimate parts only on the outside, using clean water, and not washing inside, not douching?



CLOSING / GOODBYE

Sincerely thank the women for their participation and congratulate them for having taken the time to do something for themselves.

Also, ask them to share what they thought about the meeting, what part they liked the most, and what part they did not like.

After listening to their opinions, give a commitment to doing things better in the future, with help from all of them.



WHAT SHOULD WE DO AT THE END OF THE MEETING?

- Write down the questions that the women had to ask the health provider/clinic staff.
- Pick up the materials used during the meeting and put them away.