

# National Cervical Screening Program

Lessons from the first year of the renewed  
National Cervical Screening Program

ANZGOG Annual Scientific Meeting

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Australian Government

NATIONAL  
**CERVICAL SCREENING**  
PROGRAM

A joint Australian, State and Territory Government Program

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# National Cervical Screening Program: Key changes

Program features	Pre-1 Dec 2017	Renewed (post 1 Dec 2017)
Primary screening test	Pap test	HPV test
Reflex test	N/A	Liquid based cytology
Age range	18 to 69 years	25 to 74 years
Screening interval	Two yearly	Five yearly
Self-collection	No	Yes
Screening results	Cervical abnormalities	Risk of significant cervical abnormalities
Invitation system	No	Yes
Register	Jurisdictional	National

# National Cervical Screening Program: Current challenges and issues

## Challenges:

- New NCSP MBS Items and restrictors
- HPV primary screening – understanding risk-based approach to screening
- Access to self-collection to promote participation in under-screened women

## Particularly for women:

- Under 25 years
- Women transitioning with an abnormality into the renewed NCSP
- Women over 75 years
- Management of women with cervical cancer symptoms in the renewed program

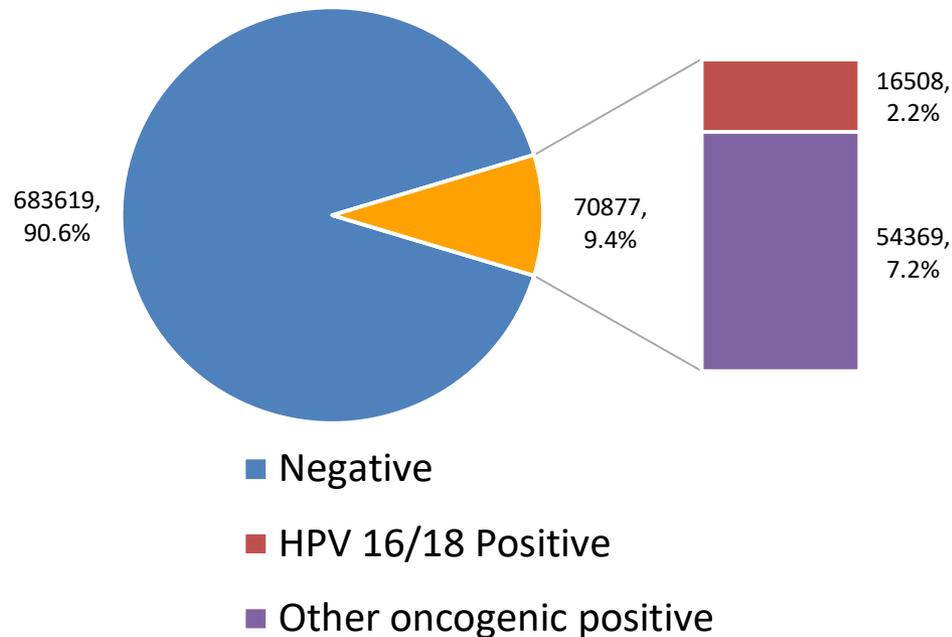
## Creating demand for colposcopy and unnecessary treatment

# MBS items

#	Context	Test type	Age	Restrictor
1	Clinician collected Cervical Screening Test (asymptomatic)	HPV	≥ 24yrs and 9mths	One per patient in 57mth period
2	Self collected Cervical Screening Test (asymptomatic)	HPV	≥30yrs of age	One per patient in 7yrs (84mth) period
3	Symptomatic patient, screening in specific populations, follow up test or post treatment for clinical management	HPV	Any age	
4	Follow up self collect for clinical management	HPV	Any age	One per patient in 21mths following detection of HPV (any type) under Item 2
5	Follow up after total hysterectomy	HPV	Any age	
6	Repeat HPV test following an unsatisfactory HPV test	HPV	Any age	
7	Cytology of cervical or vaginal vault specimen	LBC	Any age	

# National Cervical Screening Program:

## HPV detection among screening tests in asymptomatic women



- HPV detection rate among all screening tests 1 December 2017 to 31 May 2018
- Of the 9.4% with positive HPV results:
  - 23% are attributable to the detection of HPV 16/18.
  - The remaining 77% were positive for other oncogenic HPV types.

NB: Reported data includes HPV and reflex LBC tests, where the reason for HPV test was primary screening

# National Cervical Screening Program:

## Issue – Availability of Self-collection testing

- Currently there are two pathology laboratories accredited to process self-collected samples
- To assist more pathology laboratories to attain accreditation from NATA to perform tests on self-collected samples, a technical expert committee has been convened under the National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council (NPAAC) to develop minimum validation standards for laboratories interested in providing this service
- Self-collection of vaginal samples for human papillomavirus (HPV) is available under the renewed program for women aged 30 years or over, who have declined to have a cervical sample collected by a healthcare provider, and are either:
  - overdue for cervical screening by two years or longer (i.e. four years or more since their last Pap test, or seven years or more since their last Cervical Screening Test), or
  - have never screened



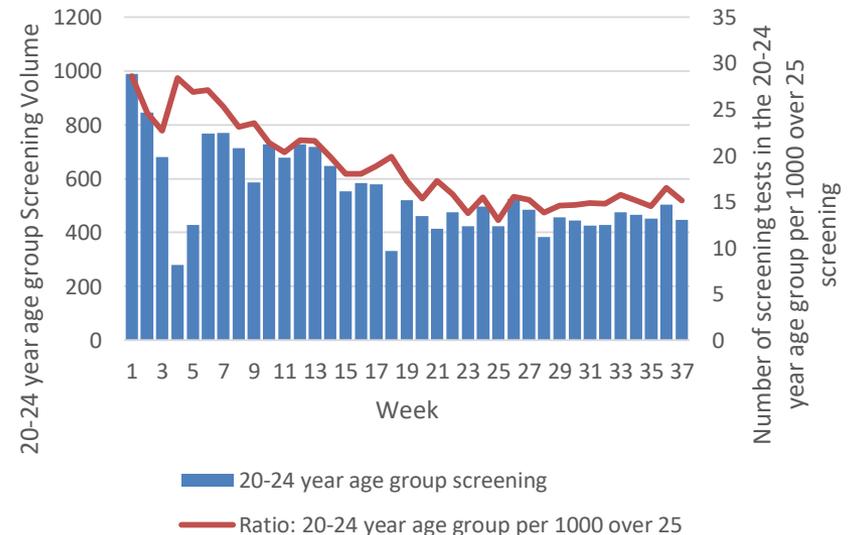
# National Cervical Screening Program: Current challenges and issues

## Cervical screening for women under 25 years

### Exceptions and guidelines

- Women who are **symptomatic**
- Women under 25 years of age who are currently **under clinical management for a cervical abnormality**
- Women who **experienced early sexual activity at a young age (under 14 years)** and who had not received the HPV vaccine before sexual debut
- [The Pathology Test Guide for Cervical and Vaginal Testing](#) provides information for healthcare providers **on what test to order** based upon a woman's cervical history and clinical situation.

### Response: Targeted communications



# National Cervical Screening Program: Current challenges and issues

## Women transitioning with a prior abnormality to the renewed NCSP

### Exceptions and guidelines

Following an abnormal Pap test, women should attend their next scheduled follow-up appointment with their healthcare provider

- Follow up after Low Grade cytology - 12 months since their last Pap test - offer the Cervical Screening Test (HPV with reflex LBC if HPV detected)
- Under 25 years olds with prior abnormalities should continue with follow up Cervical Screening Test as above
- Following treatment of histologically-confirmed High Grade – commence (or continue) Test of Cure (co-test)

# National Cervical Screening Program: Current challenges and issues

## Cervical screening for women aged 70 years and older

### Guidelines

- Between the ages of 70 and 74, participants are encouraged to participate in routine cervical screening.
- If a woman's Cervical Screening Test result shows that no HPV infection is present, then she can safely stop screening and exit the National Cervical Screening Program; however if intermediate or higher risk then referred to colposcopy
- If HPV is detected the woman should be followed up in accordance with the [2016 Guidelines](#).
- Women can choose to continue screening beyond 75 years of age, but will not receive reminders from the National Cancer Screening Register to screen. However, reminders for follow-up will be sent if an abnormal test result is received.

# National Cervical Screening Program:

## Clarification of cervical cancer symptoms in the renewed program

### Background

- Some healthcare providers are using low thresholds to determine whether a woman shows cervical cancer symptoms
- Pathology laboratories are getting requests for co-tests for women with symptoms that are usually not indicative of cervical cancer
- While women are encouraged to present to their doctor if they are experiencing symptoms suggestive of cervical cancer, the information previously provided to healthcare providers did not define the appropriate symptomatic threshold
- This has led to over-referral of women for co-tests, where a cervical screening test would have been appropriate, if due
- In order to address this gap, a set of more specific symptoms suggestive of cervical cancer has been developed and endorsed by the Steering Committee for the Renewal Implementation Project (SCRIP).

Patient presents as	Context	What to write on the pathology request form
Symptomatic	For investigation of symptoms e.g. unusual or persistent vaginal bleeding (post coital, unexplained inter-menstrual or any post-menopausal), discharge (offensive and/or blood stained) or deep persistent dyspareunia.	“Co-test” or “HPV & LBC”, “Symptomatic” ( <a href="#">describe the symptoms</a> )

# National Cervical Screening Program:

## Clarification of cervical cancer symptoms in the renewed program (contd..)

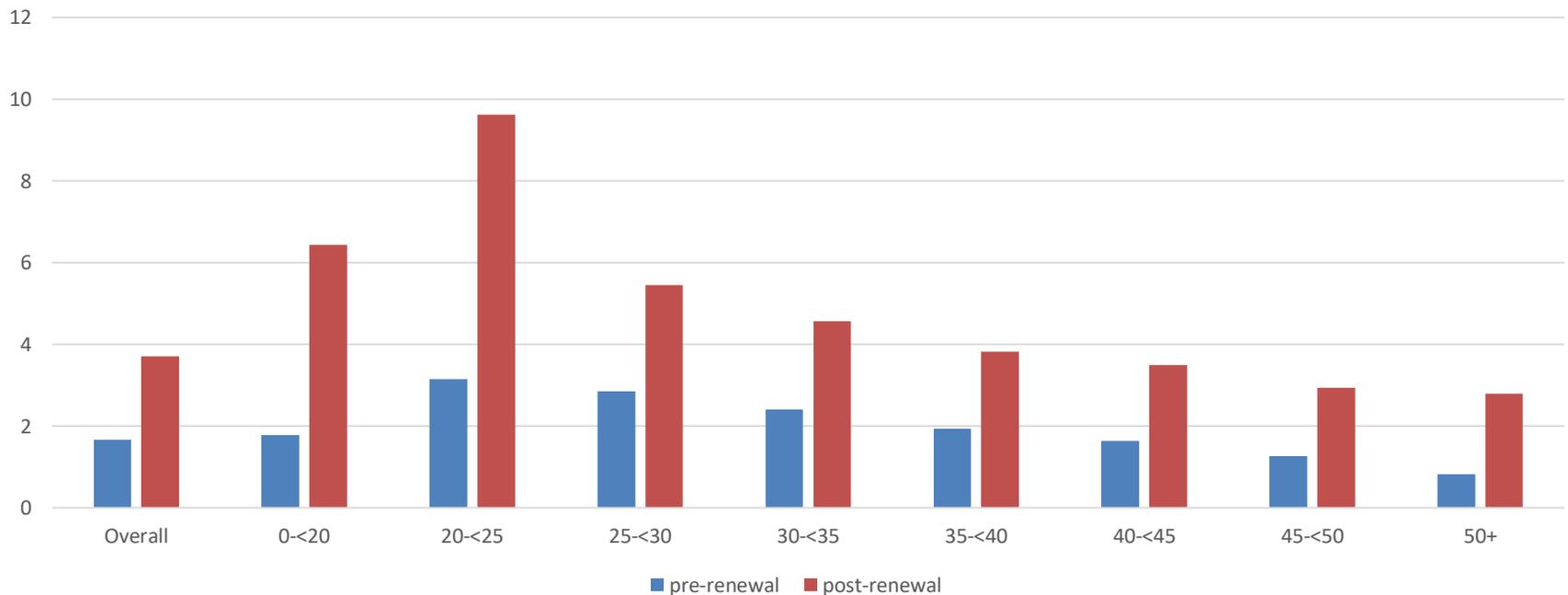
### Pathology Test Guide for cervical and vaginal testing

- In the renewed Program, when healthcare providers are filling out a Pathology Test Request form, healthcare providers are required to describe the symptoms in more detail to help pathology laboratories understand why a co-test is requested.

Symptoms	Threshold
Vaginal bleeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• post coital,</li><li>• unexplained inter-menstrual, or</li><li>• any post-menopausal</li></ul>
Discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• offensive, and/or</li><li>• blood stained</li></ul>
Pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• deep persistent dyspareunia</li></ul>

# Colposcopy demand has increased more than predicted

Percentage of colposcopy recommendations pre and post-renewal by age  
Last 3 months of Pap NCSP vs first 9 months of renewed NCSP



# Further information and contact

## National Cervical Screening Program

- For further information on the National Cervical Screening Program, visit our website at [cancerscreening.gov.au/cervical](https://cancerscreening.gov.au/cervical)

## National Cancer Screening Register

- The telephone number for the NCSR contact centre is 1800 627 701
- HPV data can be found at the NCSR web site at <https://www.ncsr.gov.au/>