Dear Practice Manager & cervical screening Sample Takers

Re Cervical screening, third invitation letter – exception reporting

I am writing to your practice to bring to your attention that uptake of cervical screening is at its lowest level since electronic recording began, the national average currently being only 73% for 25 to 64 and only 70.2% for 24 to 49 year olds. The drop in uptake has been attributed to a number of factors such as lack of out of office hours GP appointments and lack of understanding by young women on the importance of the screening test.

New research from the Department of Health Behavioural Insight Team and Imperial College shows that making changes to the invitation letter can increase uptake of cervical screening appointments

The Department of Health, in collaboration with Imperial College and the NHS Shared Business Services for North East London, conducted a randomised control trial (RCT) to investigate the effect of message framing in the invitation letter on cervical screening attendance. The trial was conducted in an urban area of London where screening rates are below the target and national average.

The three trial arms were:
- Control: Current invitation letter
- Gain framed letter: ‘Cervical screening saves 4,500 lives in England every year’
- Loss framed letter: ‘Every year over 700 women die in the UK from cervical cancer’

The results showed that overall, for all ages, the loss frame letter was significantly more effective than the current national invitation letter, the gain framed letter, however, was the most effective for women aged 27 and under; receiving their first invite, with 70.4% attendance at 32 weeks compared to 61.0% (control uptake).

In light of this research please could you consider using one of these letters as a third reminder letter for cervical screening to your non responders prior to exception reporting.

I have attached copies of the research letters used and suggested changes to the letters (underlined) to enable their use as a 3rd invitation letter.

If we can be of any further assistance, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with us on england.screening1@nhs.net.

Yours sincerely,

Cath Fenton
Screening and Immunisation Lead
Dear Miss Smith,

Your NHS cervical screening appointment is / was due on or after «PAT_REC_DATE». But I note that you have not yet attended for the test.

Every year over 700 women in the UK die from cervical cancer

Please call your GP surgery on 0000 123 4567 or your local clinic to book your appointment today.

It is a personal choice for you whether or not you have cervical screening and to help you make the decision, you will have received an information leaflet with previous invitations we have enclosed an information leaflet.

Your result will be sent to your home and to your GP and should arrive within two weeks of your test.

Yours sincerely,

The Screening Team
Dear Miss Smith,

Your NHS cervical screening appointment is due on or after 1/11/2016 but I note that you have not yet attended for the test.

Please call your GP surgery on 020 8123 4567 or your local clinic to book your appointment today.

It is a personal choice for you whether or not you have cervical screening and to help you make the decision, you will have received an information leaflet with previous invitations we have enclosed an information leaflet.

Your result will be sent to your home and to your GP and should arrive within two weeks of your test.

Yours sincerely

Screening Department

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Gain framed letter

24/08/16

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Cervical screening saves 4,500 lives in England every year’

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NHS Number:  

Test due on or after:  

Date of Birth:  

Last Recorded test:  

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