



The European Cancer Organisation Publishes a Position Paper on Self-Sampling and HPV Screening in Europe

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The Europe's Beating Cancer Plan sets out recommendations for cervical cancer elimination across the EU, including an ambitious goal to offer screening to 90% of the eligible population by 2025. The European Cancer Organisation today publishes a new [Position Paper "Self-Sampling and HPV Screening in Europe"](#) with recommendations that will help member states achieve this.

A significant increase in the uptake of cervical cancer screening, using HPV testing, is needed if we are to eliminate cervical cancer. What will also help enormously is offering women and people with a cervix the opportunity to collect the HPV sample themselves, a process known as self-sampling.

Self-sampling is particularly suitable for those who find it hard to access standard screening facilities, perhaps because they live in countries with less provision or in remote areas or have a disability, or where there are cultural barriers or previous traumatic experiences.

Key points of recommendation in the position paper include:

- Self-sampling should form a central component of national cervical cancer screening programmes.
- Self-sampling should be utilised to support the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- HPV self-sampling should be endorsed by the European Commission's guidelines on cervical cancer. There should also be guidance on effective delivery.
- Research should continue into the best methods of delivering effective self-sampling with high levels of uptake as part of cervical cancer screening programmes.



Many studies have found that self-sampling is very acceptable to users and can be just as accurate as conventional testing. It is already being offered in the Netherlands as an alternative to a clinician examination and uptake has been high.

The European Cancer Organisation's paper on self-sampling, produced by the [HPV Action Network](#) in collaboration with the [Special Network on the Impact of Covid-19 on Cancer](#), can be read in full [here](#).

Commenting on the newly published paper, **Matti Aapro**, President of the European Cancer Organisation, said:

"The European Cancer Organisation gives full support to Europe's Beating Cancer Plan aim of a 90% uptake of cervical cancer screening. We believe that self-sampling can play a decisive role in achieving this rightly ambitious target. We hope the European Commission and national programmes will endorse this technique."

Adding to this, **Daniel Kelly**, Co-Chair of the HPV Action Network, stated:

"Self-sampling is now a valuable tool to improve cervical cancer screening uptake among those who find it difficult to access standard screening services, perhaps because they live in remote areas or have a disability, or where there are cultural barriers or previous traumatic experiences. Self-sampling can also help to reduce embarrassment, anxiety and pain among users."

Mirjam Crul, Co-Chair of the Special Network on the Impact of Covid-19 on Cancer, said:

"Before the pandemic, cervical cancer screening uptake ranged from about 25% to 80% across EU countries. During the pandemic, these already low levels have fallen further. Self-sampling can help screening uptake recover from Covid-19 as well as being part of a longer-term screening strategy."

Viewable online: <https://www.europeancancer.org/resources/219:self-sampling-and-hpv-screening-in-europe>