**POSTER PRESENTER**

**POSTER #8**

**UNDERSTANDING CAUSES OF LOSS TO FOLLOW-UP AMONG WOMEN SUSPECTED OF CERVICAL LESIONS IN TANZANIA**

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**BACKGROUND** In Tanzania, cervical cancer is the leading cause of cancer and cancer-related death. The Ocean Road Cancer Institute (ORCI) is regarded as the gold standard for cervical cancer screening due to its resources and experienced screening clinic nurses. In 2015, The World Health Organization (WHO) established a referral program between two local health clinics, Temeke Referral Hospital and Magomeni Health Center, to the Ocean Road Cancer Institute. If nurses observed lesions or symptoms of suspected cervical cancer, patients were referred to Ocean Road. In 2017, a study was published that revealed that from February 2015 to May 2016, 44% of patients referred to the ORCI from Magomeni and 64% of women from Temeke did not go for screening. The aim of this study was to understand the causes of loss to follow up among women referred to ORCI from these health clinics.

**METHODS** In this study, women who should have been referred to the ORCI according to WHO referral guidelines were identified from the registration logbooks at the Temeke and Magomeni health clinics from February 2015 to June 2018. These women were interviewed to understand the cause(s) of loss to follow-up if they did not attend the screening clinic at ORCI (case group), or interviewed to understand what prompted their follow-up if they did attend the screening clinic at ORCI (control group).

**RESULTS** 291 women were interviewed, of whom 103 (37.1%) women did not follow-up for screening. By clinic, 36% of women from Magomeni did not follow up for care and 39% of women from Temeke did not follow up for care. There were no large differences between demographic factors or levels of knowledge about cervical cancer between the case and control group, except for their familiarity with patients with cervical cancer. Of the 108 women who did not follow up, 48 of them said that they were not told to come to Ocean Road, were referred elsewhere, or were told to return to the screening clinic for checkup, all of which reflect noncompliance to the WHO Referral Process between Temeke Referral Hospital or Magomeni Health Center and ORCI.

**CONCLUSIONS** This study revealed that loss to follow up between screening clinics at Temeke or Magomeni to Ocean Road is due to noncompliance with the WHO Referral process rather than patient specific factors. These findings will be used to inform administrative and educational improvements that can be made to reduce loss to follow up rates between Temeke and Magomeni health clinics and the Ocean Road Cancer Institute.

**CONTENT CATEGORY:** epidemiology, patient care

**KEYWORDS:** *cervical cancer, cancer screening, professional education, developing countries*