

## **Cervix Visual Assessment Guide**

Cervical Cancer Visual Assessment Guide reduces the number of women being incorrectly referred to oncology and colposcopy clinics

The Cervix Visual Assessment Guide (CVAG) was first developed in 2012 by Alison Roberts, Specialist Nurse Colposcopist, and colleagues at South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, as a practice development initiative and was designed to help primary care health professionals assess, evaluate and understand the difference between normal and benign cervical appearances and cancers.

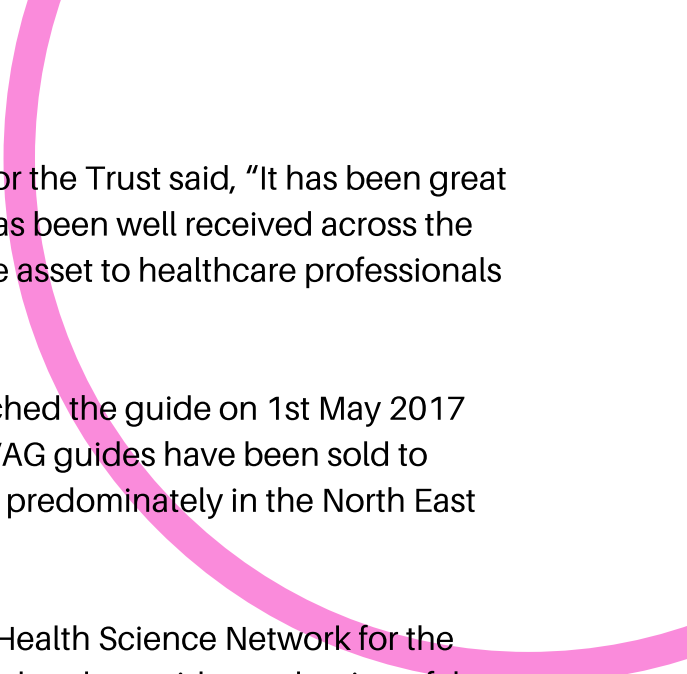
The CVAG was developed in response to audit and colposcopy data suggesting some primary health workers have little experience of recognising the signs and symptoms of invasive cervical cancer. This results in a significant number of women being referred to oncology and colposcopy clinics with suspected cancer of the cervix, in the absence of disease.

Additionally, inappropriate referral often results in patients suffering unnecessary distress and anxiety. General Practitioner and Nurse Screener Trainees do not frequently have the opportunity within local colposcopy clinics to practice skills relating to assessing the cervix and distinguishing normal from abnormal appearances.

As well as raising awareness of signs, symptoms and appearance of cervical cancer, the guide also demonstrates the wide range of normal cervical appearances and provides advice and referral guidance for the clinical management of women attending surgery with irregular vaginal bleeding increasing the accuracy of referral for women with suspected invasive cervical lesions and improving the quality of care for women.

A representative from the North East Cervical Screening service commented, "This is an excellent tool to supplement learning and to support nurses and doctors working in all areas where cervical screening takes place."

Cervical screening is a method of preventing cancer by detecting and treating abnormalities of the cervix. The NHS cervical screening programme is available to women aged 25 to 64 in England. Women aged 25 to 49 receive invitations every 3 years. Women aged 50 to 64 receive invitations every 5 years. Early detection and treatment can prevent 75% of cancers developing.



Sharon Brown, Innovation Portfolio Co-ordinator for the Trust said, "It has been great to work with the team on this project. The guide has been well received across the region and has proven to be an extremely valuable asset to healthcare professionals providing cervical screening services."

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust launched the guide on 1st May 2017 from their Innovation Hub and since its launch, CVAG guides have been sold to around 100 different locations throughout the UK, predominately in the North East and Northern Ireland.

The Trust is currently working with the Academic Health Science Network for the North East and North Cumbria (AHSN NENC) to undertake a wider evaluation of the guide and hope to develop an electronic format ensuring guidelines are kept up to date and more visual guidance can be added.

The Cervix Visual Assessment Guide (CVAG) is now available to order from the Innovation website or for more information e-mail [stees.innovationorders@nhs.net](mailto:stees.innovationorders@nhs.net)

