

Barriers to Cervical Cancer Screening in Female Refugee Population in Jordan.

**Addressing Challenges and Outlooks for
Female Refugees**

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Outline

- Refugee situation in Jordan
- Cancer care for refugees
- Cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination in Jordan
- Cervical cancer screening in refugee population
- Future prospectives

Geography



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Refugee Situation in Jordan

Palestinian refugees:

- >2.39 million registered Palestinian refugees.
- 18% live in the ten recognized Palestine refugee camps
- 3 unofficial camps, camp surroundings
- All of them live under similar socio-economic conditions.
- The vast majority have Jordanian nationality, except for some 185,000 'ex-Gazan' refugees..
- UNRWA beneficiaries who are not Jordanian citizens, such as those who emigrated from the Gaza Strip in 1967, face restrictions on their access to health care, leaving them extremely vulnerable.



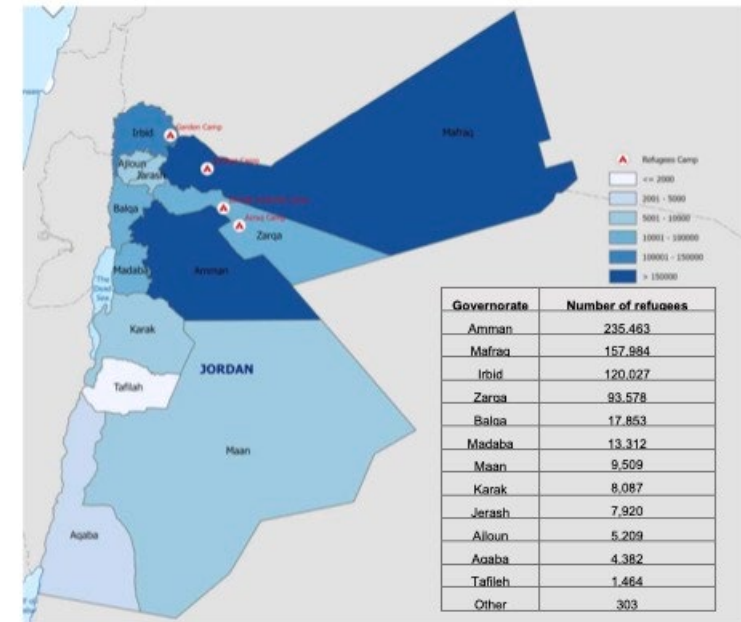
Refugee Situation in Jordan

Other Nationalities

- Predominantly from Syria, but also large groups from Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia.
- Some 82 per cent of them live outside of refugee camps and close to 50 per cent are children.
- **Total Number of Registered Refugees 657,857**

Source: UNHCR operational update/Jordan/December 2024

Key Refugee Figures (as of 31 December 2024)

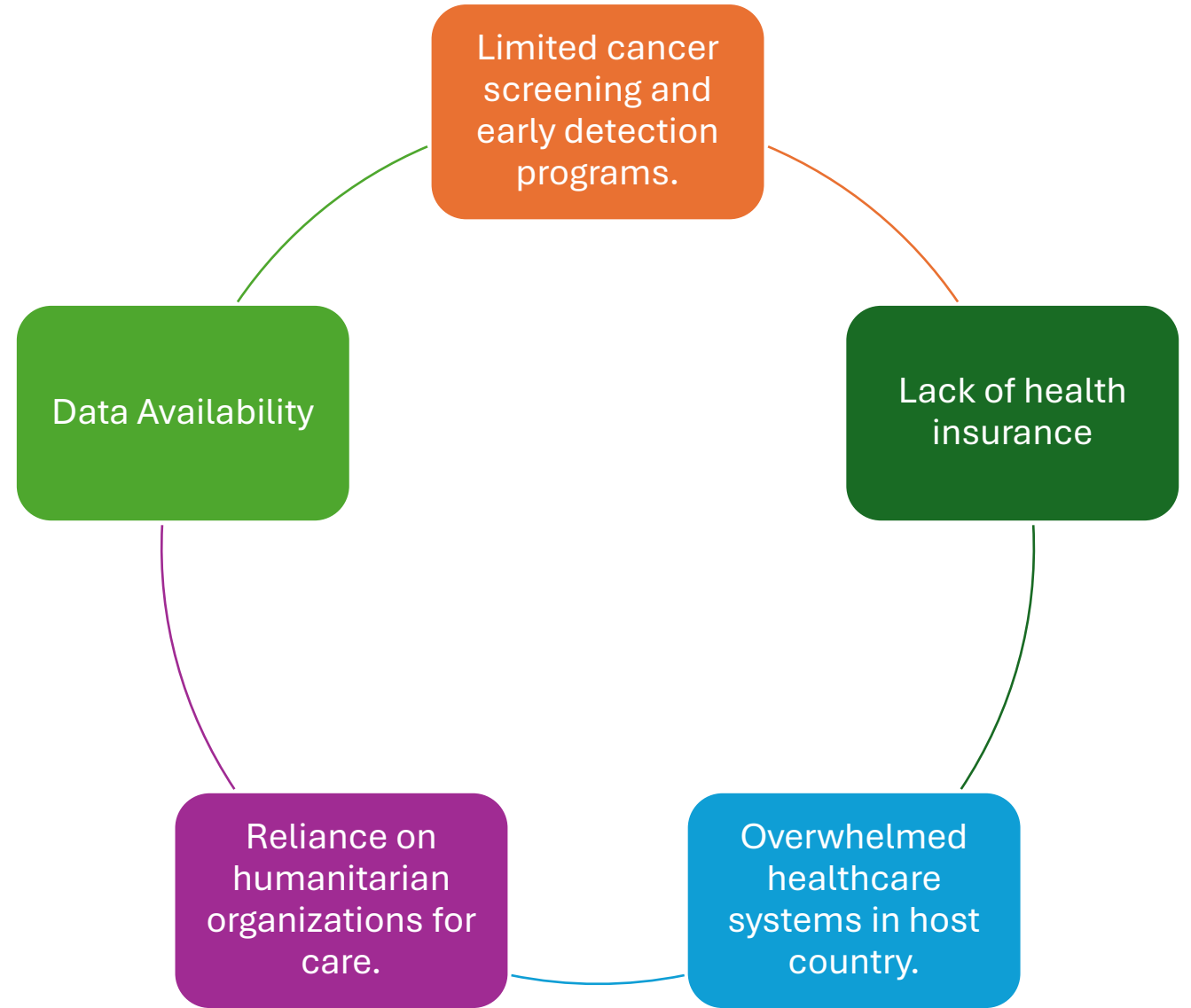


* The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

- Despite its struggling economy, scarce water resources, and increasing security threats, Jordan has become host to the second highest number of refugees (89 per 1,000 inhabitants) in the world.
- Cancer care for refugees is considered suboptimal because of limited financial coverage and access to care.
- Awareness and education for the prevention, screening, and early detection of cancer are lacking.
- The main focus among refugee populations had been on infectious diseases and malnutrition.

- Mansour A, Al-Omari A, Sultan I. **Burden of Cancer Among Syrian Refugees in Jordan.** J Glob Oncol. 2018 Oct;4:1-6. doi: 10.1200/JGO.18.00132. PMID: 30307806; PMCID: PMC7010435.

Challenges of Cancer Care Among Female Refugees



HPV-Related Cancer Screening Access in Jordan

No national
screening
program for
cervical cancer

No HPV
vaccination
programs

JORDAN

CERVICAL CANCER PROFILE

TOTAL POPULATION,
FEMALE (2019): 4 988 000

TOTAL DEATHS,
FEMALE (2019): 13 800

Morbidity and Mortality

Crude cervical cancer incidence per 100 000 women (2020):	2.3
Age-standardized cervical cancer incidence per 100 000 women (2020):	2.9
Cumulative risk of cervical cancer, ages 0-74 (2020):	0.3%
Cervical cancer deaths (2019):	64
Cervical cancer mortality-to-incidence ratio (2020):	0.62
Population-based cancer registry exists (2021):	Yes



Primary Prevention

HPV vaccination programme coverage among girls (2020)



HPV vaccination is not included in the national vaccination schedule

HPV vaccination programme (2020):

HPV included in national vaccination programme:	No
Scale of vaccination programme:	-
Year of introduction:	-
Primary target cohort:	-

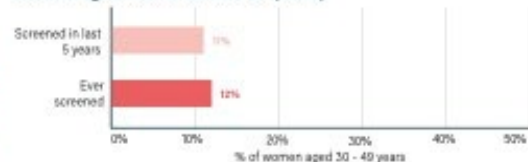
Related risk factors:

Tobacco use prevalence, women aged 15+ years (2020)**:	13%
Condom use at last high-risk sex (-):	ND
HIV incidence per 1000, women aged 15+ years (2020):	<0.01

Secondary Prevention

National screening programme for cervical cancer exists (2021):	No
Primary screening test used (2021):	-
Target age range of programme (2021):	-
Programme/guidelines exist to strengthen early detection of first symptoms at primary health care level (2021):	No
Clearly defined referral system exists from primary care to secondary and tertiary care (2021):	DK

Screening for cervical cancer (2019)



1 in 10 women have been screened for cervical cancer in the last 5 years

Treatment and Supportive Care

National guidelines on cervical cancer management exist (2021):	No	Number of radiotherapy units per 10 000 cancer patients (2021):	11
		Number of brachytherapy units per 10 000 cancer patients (2021):	1

Cancer diagnosis and treatment services generally available (2021):

Cancer centre or cancer department at tertiary level:	Yes	Number of medical staff (per 10 000 cancer patients):	
Pathology services (laboratories):	Yes	Radiation oncologists (2019):	ND
Cancer surgery:	Yes	Medical physicists (2019):	ND
Chemotherapy:	Yes	Surgeons (-):	ND
Radiotherapy:	Yes	Radiologists (2019):	ND
		Nuclear medicine physicians (2019):	27

Palliative care for patients with NCDs in the public health system generally available (2021):		Reported annual opioid consumption - excluding methadone - in oral morphine equivalence per capita (2017):	4mg
In primary health care facilities:	No		
In community or home-based care:	No		

WHO Cervical Cancer Elimination Strategy Targets for 2030

90% of girls fully vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by the age of 15

70% of women are screened with a high-performance test by 35 years of age and again by 45 years of age

90% of women identified with cervical disease receive treatment

ND = data not available DK = don't know

* Programme coverage: % of national target population (among 9-14-year-old girls)
† Coverage by age 15: % of population turning 15 that have been vaccinated against HPV at any time between ages 9 to 14


**Data refer to tobacco smoking only; in absence of sufficient data on all tobacco use

[See Explanatory Notes for indicator descriptions.](#)

World Health Organization - Cervical Cancer Country Profiles, 2021

Top Frequent Female Cancers in Jordan


Table 9: Ten most common cancers among Jordanian Females, 2022



Rank	Site	Frequency	Percent
1	Breast	1743	36.8
2	Colorectal	454	9.6
3	Thyroid	272	5.7
4	Corpus Uteri	208	4.4
5	Ovary	167	3.5
6	NHL	163	3.4
7	Leukemia	155	3.3
8	Trachea,Bronchus,Lung	132	2.8
9	Brain,Nervous System	122	2.6
10	Stomach	94	2.0

N.B: Total top ten female cancers accounted for 3510 (74.1%)

Table 13: The most frequent types of cancer among non-Jordanian females, 2022.



Rank	Primary site	N	%
1	Breast	347	33.8
2	Colorectal	104	10.1
3	Thyroid	70	6.8
4	Brain,Nervous System	43	4.2
5	NHL	36	3.5
6	Trachea,Bronchus,Lung	29	2.8
7	Corpus Uteri	28	2.7
8	Ovary	26	2.5
9	Leukemia	25	2.4
10	HL	21	2.0
11	Others	297	28.9
Total		1026	100

- Jordan Cancer Registry 2022

- 11th most common cancer in women.
- 10th most common cancer among women aged between 15 and 44 years

HPV INFORMATION CENTRE

https://hpvcentre.net/statistics/reports/JOR_FS

Cervical Cancer Awareness

- 55.5% of the participants had no information about the cervical smear.
- 75% did not know the risk factors.
- 50% of the sample did not know where to take the test.
- 50% reported a lack of encouragement from the husband to undertake the test.
- More than half of the participants (56.5%) expressed fear that cervical screening would be a painful examination even though they reported not having any previous experience with the test.

Maabreh, R.S., Al-Husban, R.Y., Al-Akash, H.Y. and Al-Shdayfat, N. (2023), "**Women's health concern in Jordan: knowledge, practice and barriers toward cervical cancer screening**", International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 128-136. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJHRH-04-2021-0085>

Lack of knowledge towards screening and belief in its efficacy, and fear of the results were identified as driving barriers towards screening. Effective formulation of comprehensive awareness campaigns is pivotal towards successful intervention to the reported barriers.

[Barriers to cervical cancer screening in a developing Middle Eastern country: A nationwide survey.](#)

Zaid A Abdulelah, Jehad AlSamhori, Lina AlQirem, Ahmad Al-Qirem, Abdel Rahman AlSamhori
Journal of Clinical Oncology 2023 41:16_suppl, 10545-10545

Cervical cancer prevalence and screening data in Jordanian refugee population

Data Collection Methods:

- Surveys, hospital records, and NGO reports.

Challenges:

- Snapshots
- HPV-related cancers are underreported among refugee populations.
- Data regarding screening is patchy.

Gaps in Surveillance:

- No dedicated cancer registries for refugees.
- Limited integration of refugee health data into national systems.

Article

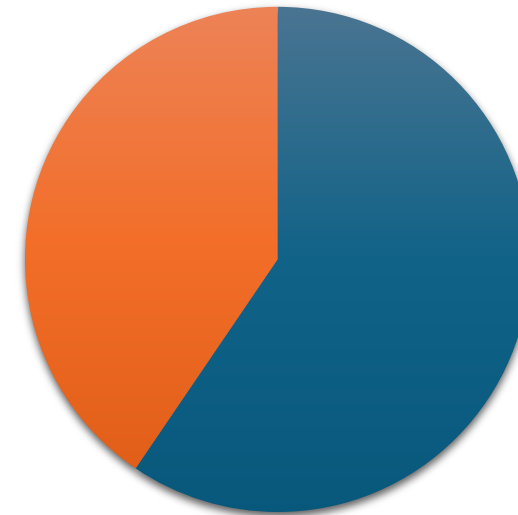
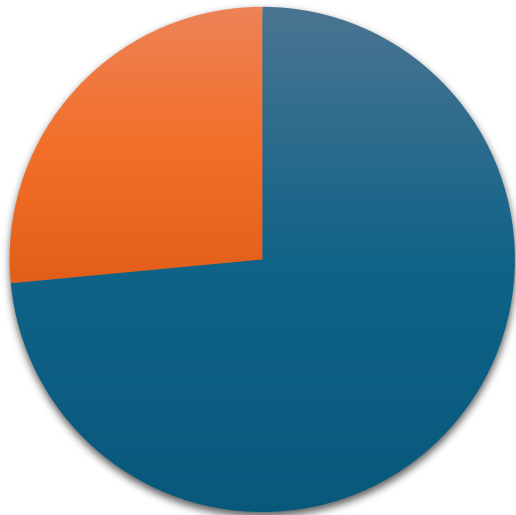
Cervical Cancer Screening among Female Refugees in Jordan: A Cross-Sectional Study

Nadia Muhaidat ^{1,*}, Mohammad A. Alshrouf ^{1,*}, Roaa N. Alshajrawi ¹, Zeina R. Miqdadi ¹,
Raghad Amro ², Abedalaziz O. Rabab'ah ³, Serena A. Qatawneh ², Alaa M. Albandi ¹ and Kamil Fram ¹

- A cross-sectional study of 359 Palestinian refugee women who were over the age of 19 and under the age of 65 and residing in Jerash camp, Jordan.

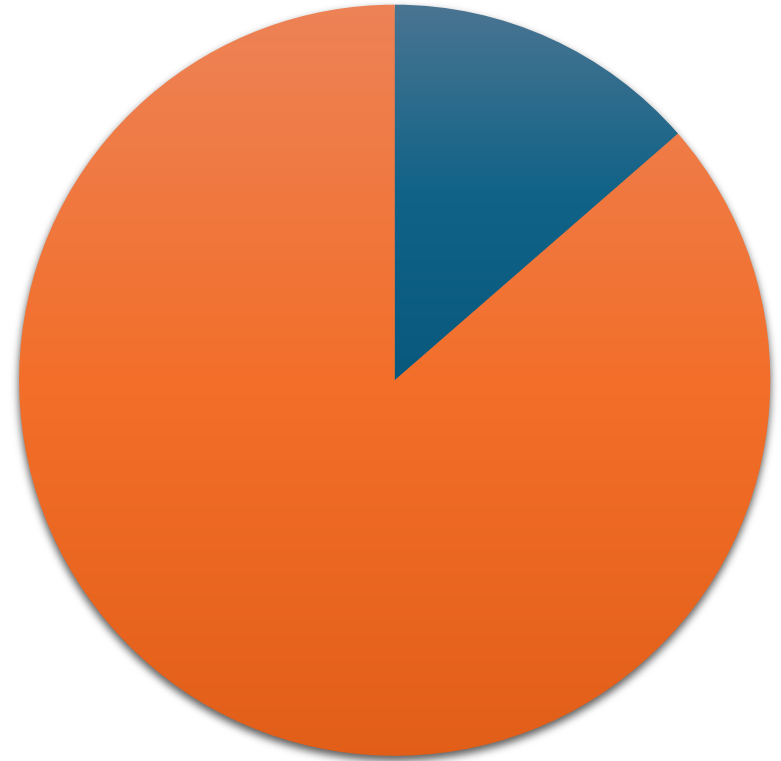
Cervical Smear Awareness

- 73.5% had heard of the cervical smear test.
- More than half (59.5%) of the participants believed that all women should receive a Pap smear test regularly



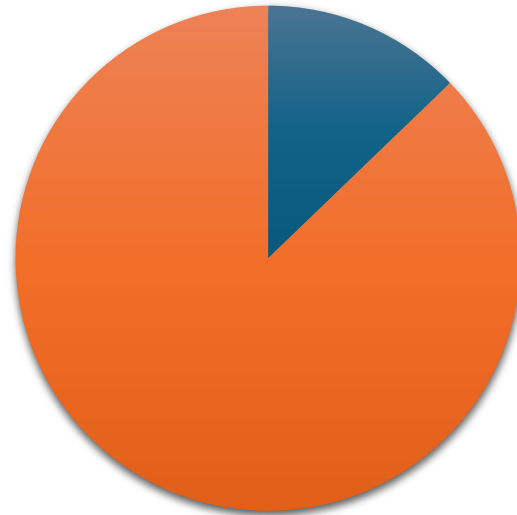
HPV Awareness

- The participants' knowledge of HPV was found to be low, with only around 13% having heard of it



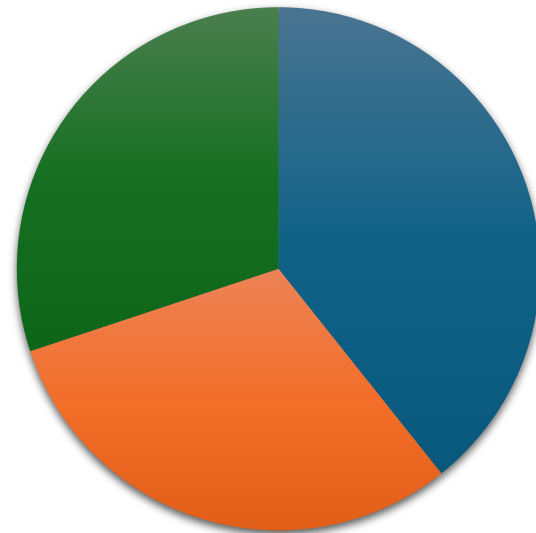
Cervical Smear Uptake

- only 12.8% of the participants had ever had a Pap smear in their lifetime



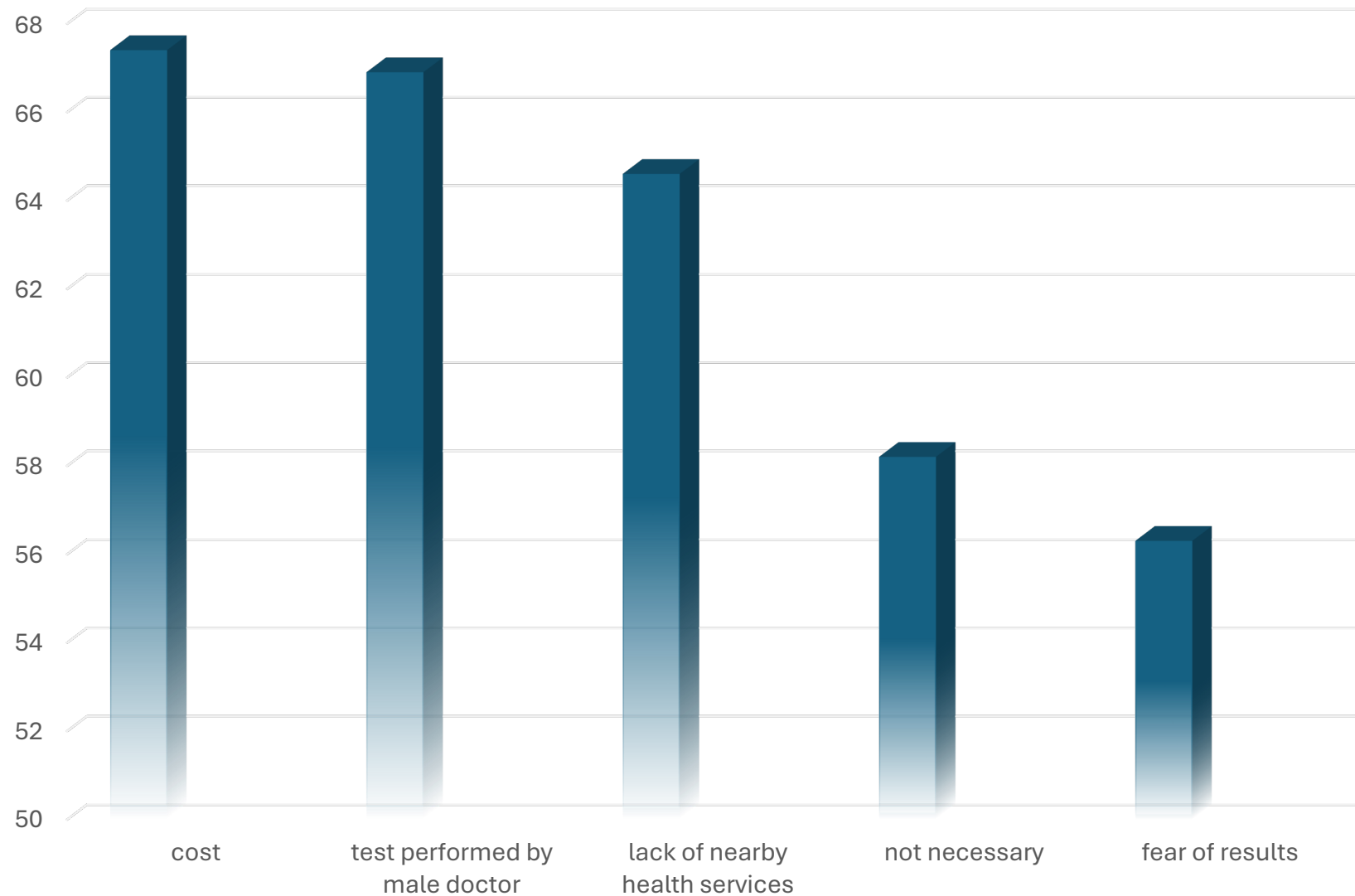
Willingness to have a smear

- Among the participants, 39.3% said they were willing to have a smear test, 30.1% were unsure, and 30.6% were unwilling



■ willing ■ unwilling ■ not sure

Perceived Barriers to Cervical Screening (%)



Barriers to Cervical Screening in Refugees

Financial: High costs of treatment and lack of insurance.

Cultural: Stigma around cancer and reproductive health.

Structural: Overburdened healthcare systems and limited resources.

Geographic: Refugees in remote areas have limited access to facilities.

Awareness: Low knowledge about HPV and cancer prevention.

Female refugees face unique challenges, including cultural barriers and lack of gender-sensitive services.

Moving Forward

Short term:

- Awareness campaigns about CC screening that target all age and social groups, utilizing social media.
- Encouraging health care providers to educate women on being tested routinely
- Train healthcare workers to address cultural and gender-specific needs.
- Increasing CC screening awareness and uptake through a strong collaboration between the Jordanian government and NGOs.
- Providing free screening test centers in refugee areas

Moving Forward

Long term:

- National CC screening program
- HPV vaccination program
- Develop refugee-specific cancer registries.
- Advocate for policies that prioritize refugee health in national cancer plans and integrates refugee health data into national systems.



MTCC
editerranean

Don't fear the smear

Be Informed
Be Screened
Be Vaccinated

لا تهابي المسحة
زوري طبيبك للكشف
المبكر عن سرطان عنق الرحم



Conclusion

Summary:

- Female refugees in Jordan face significant barriers to HPV-related cancer care.
- Innovative approaches and partnerships are needed to prioritize refugee health in national and international agendas.



THANK YOU