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VIROLOGIA

PREVALENCE OF CERVICAL HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS INFECTION IN A COHORT OF MIGRANT WOMEN ARRIVING IN PALERMO FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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INTRODUZIONE

The significant increase in migration flows in some regions, such as Sicily, leads to the analysis of epidemiological changes in the spread of sexually transmitted infections (ISTs). In fact, the prevalence of ISTs is an indicator of the living conditions of migrants (poverty, sexual habits or sexual abuse). Migrants have specific needs, susceptibility, and risks, which must be known in order to provide personalized assistance. More than 1 million ISTs are acquired worldwide every day. In particular, over 290 million women have a human papillomavirus (HPV) infection. In some cases, ISTs can have serious consequences on reproductive health (infertility) in addition to the immediate impact of the infection itself. The aim of this study was to evaluate the prevalence of HPV infection in migrant women who came to Palermo from sub-Saharan Africa.

METODI

53 women with an average age of 24 (range 12-45 years) were enrolled after undergoing a gynecological examination. To each, with the help of the cultural mediator, a questionnaire was provided concerning the migration path, socio-behavioral habits and information on medical history. Cervical swabs were collected for the molecular detection of human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV genotypes were identified by the HPV Linear Array (Roche Diagnostics) genotyping test.

RISULTATI

Of 53 cervical samples 27/53 (51%) were HPV positive. Oncogenic types were found in 23/27 (85.2%) positive samples. Multiple HPV type infections were shown in 15/53 (28,3%) of the samples of whom 5 (33.3%) had two genotypes, 5 (33.3%) three genotypes, 2 (13.3%) four genotypes, 1 (6.7%) five genotypes, 1 (6.7%) six genotypes and 1 (6.7%) nine genotypes. 100% of multiple infections and 66.7% (8/12) of single infections contained at least one high-risk genotype (HR-HPV).

CONCLUSIONI

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted disease. Prevalence of HPV infection found was relatively high (51%), in line with other published studies.
In conclusion, given the high prevalence of oncogenic genotypes, the implementation of screening and vaccination programs in the case of migrants could therefore become an effective prevention approach, capable of producing substantial benefits.