

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to you regarding the recent incident in the Scottish cervical screening programme involving incorrect exclusions from the programme following subtotal hysterectomies.

National guidance states that individuals who have had a total hysterectomy (i.e. complete removal of cervix) can be excluded from screening but those who have had a sub-total hysterectomy must continue to be screened regularly.

The ongoing review of records related to the incident has shown that it is often very difficult to find clear evidence in case notes to clarify whether the cervix was removed during the hysterectomy. This means that some women need to undergo a gynaecological examination to confirm the presence/absence of a cervix before a determination on the appropriateness of their exclusion can be made.

Therefore, with immediate effect, Health Boards should ensure that following a hysterectomy, the operation note and discharge letter both contain a clear statement regarding the presence/absence of cervical tissue and the ongoing need for cervical screening. A copy of the discharge letter should also be sent to the patient to ensure that they are aware of their ongoing requirement for cervical screening.

This information has been shared with the Scottish Association of Medical Directors who should be consulted on how to ensure this process is adopted by all obstetricians and gynaecologists.

If you have any questions about this process, please get in touch with Dr Tasmin Somerfield, Consultant in Public Health Medicine for National Screening Programmes, NSD and National Clinical Advisor for Screening, National Screening Oversight, NSS at Tasmin.Sommerfield2@nhs.scot.

**From the Chief Medical
Officer
Professor Sir Gregor Smith**

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Addresses

For action

Medical Directors, NHS Boards

Further Enquiries to:

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Yours sincerely

Gregor Smith

Professor Sir Gregor Smith
Chief Medical Officer