



Health (National Cervical Screening Programme) Amendment Act 2004

FACT SHEET 5

Evaluation to ensure quality for women

What evaluation is

- It aims to ensure the Programme is operating as it should for women and looks for ways to improve it.
- It includes a range of activities, such as day-to-day checking and audits of how well laboratories, colposcopy units and NCSP Regional Services meet Programme standards, through to less frequent cervical cancer audits that focus on why women develop cervical cancer despite the existence of the Programme.
- Evaluation includes both women participating on the Programme and women who are not participating, but who have developed cervical cancer.

What has changed

The Act allows for:

- the appointment of specially trained evaluators
- improved access to records by evaluators to assist with evaluation of the Programme
- additional evaluation of the Programme by an independent review committee of up to three members (from outside the Ministry of Health) appointed by the Minister every three years to monitor quality activities.

Who evaluators are

- They must be appointed by the Director-General of Health.
- They can be National Screening Unit staff or external evaluators.
- They must have the right qualifications for the role. Evaluators looking at personal health records are likely to be health care professionals with training in evaluation methods.

- They must maintain confidentiality and privacy about the information they see.
- They are not researchers. Any researcher has to seek approval from ethics committees and the individual consent of women to use screening records for research.

What evaluators will do

- Examine details of a woman's cervical smear history, her follow-up colposcopy and communication between screening practitioners.
- Look at cervical screening records of a number of women held in the NCSP-Register, the National Cancer Registry, hospital or laboratory records or the personal health records of smear takers.
- Undertake similar tasks to those currently carried out in hospitals and general practice to assure quality.

Oversight of evaluators in primary care

The new law allows smear takers to oversee evaluators when they look at women's personal health records. This extra requirement was introduced to assure women and their smear takers that evaluation poses no threat to doctor-patient relationships or a woman's privacy.

External evaluation of National Cervical Screening Programme

- The NCSP is monitored externally through an independent multi-disciplinary monitoring group, which monitors the Programme against national indicators and targets and produces quarterly reports.
- There have been thirteen independent monitoring reports on the Programme since October 2000. They show that the Programme is largely meeting its targets

and is following up any recommendations for improvement with health practitioners involved in the Programme.

- These reports are available on the National Screening Unit website at www.healthywomen.org.nz/MoHpro/Monitor.aspx
- A NCSP National Advisory Group has been meeting every three months since late 2003 to provide

independent advice on the Programme's direction. It includes Māori, Pacific and consumer representatives, as well as representatives of health professional groups involved in cervical screening.

- An independent audit of the Programme has been undertaken. The Cervical Cancer Audit Report – Screening of Women with Cervical Cancer 2000–2002 was published in November 2004 and is available on the Ministry of Health website www.moh.govt.nz

