

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FAO: LOCAL REPORTERS

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David Torrance MSP urges women to attend cervical screening to prevent cervical cancer



SNP MSP, David Torrance, is supporting Cervical Screening Awareness Week this week (CSAW, 12-18 June) by urging all women to attend their cervical screening appointment when invited.

Cervical cancer currently claims two lives every day in the UK and it is the most common cancer in women under 35. Cervical screening prevents up to 75% of cervical cancers yet the number of women attending is at a 10- year low in Scotland¹ and more than one in four women do not attend their screening appointment.

Commenting David Torrance MSP said;

“Cervical screening saves around 5,000 lives in the UK each year yet many women don’t understand the importance of attending screening regularly. During Cervical Screening

Awareness Week, I want to encourage women to talk to their friends, mothers and daughters about the steps they can take to reduce their risk of cervical cancer. It's such an important five-minute test that really could save your life."

Robert Music, Chief Executive of Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust, said;

"We cannot afford to see cervical screening attendance fall any further. Diagnoses of cervical cancer in the UK are worryingly high and will only increase if more women don't attend screening. We want to encourage women to look after their health, including the health of their cervix and that means attending cervical screening. By not attending, women are significantly increasing their risk of a life-threatening disease."

Find out more about Cervical Screening Awareness Week at www.jostrust.org.uk/csaw

ENDS

Notes to editors

Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust is the UK's only dedicated charity offering support and information to women of all ages and their loved ones affected by cervical cancer and cervical abnormalities. The national Helpline is on 0808 802 8000.

www.jostrust.org.uk

About cervical cancer

The majority (99.7%) of cervical cancers are caused by persistent human papillomavirus (HPV) infection which causes changes to the cervical cells

Over 3,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 200,000 with cervical abnormalities each year in the UK

Every day 9 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 2 women lose their lives

Women aged 25-49 are invited for cervical screening every 3 years and from 50-64 every 5 years.

About HPV (Human Papillomavirus)

Anyone who has ever been sexually active is at risk of contracting HPV

Around 13 high-risk types of HPV are responsible for causing cervical cancers, types 16 and 18 are the most prevalent, causing over 70 per cent of cervical cancers

Four out of five (80 per cent) women are infected with genital HPV at some point in their lives without ever knowing they have been infected because HPV is usually cleared (without treatment) by the body's immune system, with 80 per cent of cells healing within two years. A small percentage of women do not clear the infection and it can remain 'dormant' (inactive) or persistent, sometimes for many years. If your immune system doesn't clear the infection and/or the abnormal cells are not removed or monitored, the DNA of the HPV virus can join with the DNA of the epithelial cells, creating cancer cells. This is why cervical screening and HPV vaccination are important in helping to spot abnormalities and prevent cancer. Research has shown that changes in abnormalities do not usually escalate quickly and it can take between 5 to 20 years for a cancer to develop.

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