

10 January 2022

Deputy Colm Burke
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Our Ref: GM/Communications

PQ61695/21: To ask the Minister for Health the uptake rate on eligible women attending for CervicalCheck appointments; if he will provide a breakdown by age category and county for each of the years 2019, 2020 and up to 30 September 2021, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ61697/21: To ask the Minister for Health if the backlog of screening tests due to the suspension of CervicalCheck as a result of Covid-19 in 2020 has now been cleared; the number of tests that were carried out in 2019, 2020 and up to 30 September 2021; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above two Parliamentary Question which I propose to answer as one because they refer to similar material. I trust you will be satisfied with this approach.

The CervicalCheck programme was paused during April, May and June 2020 on public health advice because of the situation with COVID-19. However, despite the many restrictions COVID-19 has placed on our operations, CervicalCheck is up to date with invites for screening.

CervicalCheck is issuing letters of invitation to all participants as their screening date falls due. Each participant chooses when it is best for them to attend; they are responsible for making their appointment with their GP practice or a clinic.

The following table shows the number of women who have had one or more cervical tests in a primary care setting in 2019, 2020, and up to 30 September 2021.

Year	No women
2019	206,315
2020	143,334
2021*	259,529

*to 30 September 2021

The figures reflect the reduced number of people tested in 2020, arising from the pause in screening that year. It also shows the higher level of screening in 2021 when the programme operated at around 14% above expectations.

The target number of cervical tests set for 2021 was 280,000, but it is likely that more than 300,000 tests were conducted. (Figures will be confirmed in late February.)

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The internationally accepted standard for measuring uptake in cervical screening programmes is coverage over five-year periods. Measuring uptake over a five-year screening 'round' reduces anomalies that can arise, for example, when a person is invited in particular year, but attends the following year.

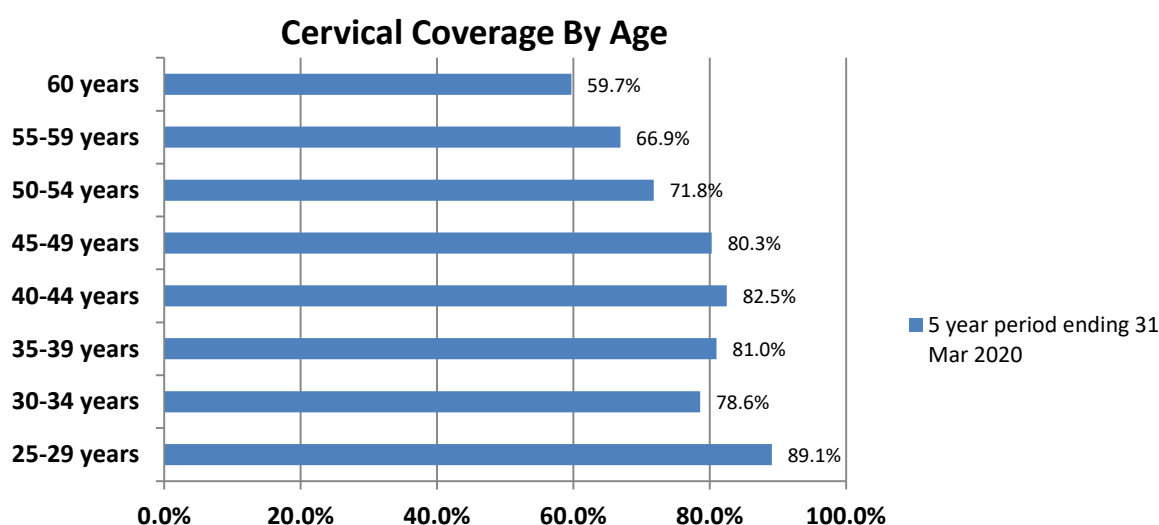
Table 1 below shows coverage by age in the five years to March 2020. The five-year coverage by county up to early 2020 is shown in Table 2. Data showing the five-year coverage rates up to September 2021 is not yet available.

CervicalCheck will have provided screening for as many women in 2020 and 2021 as it normally does in any two-year period. All women due screening in 2020 were invited in 2020, although some did not attend until 2021. All women in 2021 were invited when they were due, and primary care teams were in a position to offer appointments to all women within a couple of weeks of the appointments being requested.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Fiona Murphy
Chief Executive
National Screening Service

Table 1 showing CervicalCheck coverage by age in the five-year period to end March 2020.



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Table 2 showing cervical testing coverage by county in the five-year period ending 31 March 2020. Target coverage is 80%.

County	5 year period ending 31 Mar 2020
Carlow	87.7%
Cavan	78.0%
Clare	74.5%
Cork	77.9%
Donegal	76.3%
Dublin	73.9%
Galway	77.2%
Kerry	76.0%
Kildare	80.9%
Kilkenny	69.7%
Laois	69.0%
Leitrim	79.1%
Limerick	78.1%
Longford	78.0%
Louth	81.3%
Mayo	76.0%
Meath	78.8%
Monaghan	74.3%
Offaly	76.1%
Roscommon	74.5%
Sligo	78.2%
Tipperary	78.1%
Waterford	82.5%
Westmeath	84.4%
Wexford	80.2%
Wicklow	83.2%

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