

EPIDEMIOLOGY OF CERVICAL CANCER: WAITING TIME FOR PATIENTS FOR HISTOPATHOLOGICAL EXAMINATIONS IN BRAZIL, 2020-2024

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Introduction: Cervical cancer remains a significant in Brazilian's public health care affecting women across various age groups and in need of an effective control treatment. The Brazilian Guidelines for Cervical Cancer Screening, updated in 2016 (2nd edition, revised and expanded), have strengthened efforts to control this disease by emphasizing early detection and structured healthcare delivery. These guidelines highlight the role of Primary Healthcare (PHC) as the cornerstone of the healthcare system, focusing on prevention, health education, and exams. They also address Secondary and Tertiary Care, including procedures such as colposcopy and biopsy when abnormalities are detected, followed by further cytological evaluations or referrals to tertiary care facilities.

Objectives: This study aims to evaluate the frequency of histopathological examinations across Brazil's federative units and identify regions with the highest number of cases, analyzing variations in waiting times for these procedures. **Methods:** Data on waiting times for histopathological examinations were obtained from the DATASUS platform (TABNET) for the period spanning 2020 to 2024. The data were organized using Microsoft Excel, with records categorized by year and waiting time intervals: up to 30 days, up to 60 days, and over 60 days. Federative units with the highest examination frequencies were identified. Pivot tables facilitated data organization and analysis. All authors participated in the subsequent review and interpretation of the findings. **Results:** A total of 219,345 histopathological examinations were conducted in Brazil between 2020 and 2024. Of these, 139,917 (63.7%) were performed within 30 days, 50,180 (22.8%) within 31 to 60 days, and 29,248 (13.3%) took longer than 60 days. The state of Paraná accounted for the highest proportion of examinations, representing 14.5% of the total, followed closely by Minas Gerais with 14.3%. The year 2024 recorded the highest number of examinations, with 52,383 (23.8%) performed. Additionally, the most frequent waiting time interval was up to 30 days, which accounted for 22.7% of examinations in 2024.

Conclusion: Cervical cancer exhibits a high prevalence in Brazil, impacting a significant

number of women. The 219,345 histopathological examinations conducted during the study period reflect substantial national efforts to address this disease. The state of Paraná recorded the highest number of examinations, approximately 32,000, followed closely by Minas Gerais with around 31,000. These states consistently ranked among the highest in examination frequency, indicating heightened attention to cervical cancer incidence. Consequently, targeted governmental public health policies, particularly in federative units with elevated case rates, are essential to reduce the burden of this disease across the country.

Keywords: Epidemiology; uterine cervical neoplasms; public health.