



Abnormal cervical cytology

Andrew Evered



summary

- Cervical intraepithelial neoplasia is the histological term used to describe abnormal epithelial changes which have the propensity to develop into invasive squamous cell carcinoma of the cervix.
- Cervical glandular intraepithelial neoplasia describes the precancerous condition of the endocervical columnar epithelium and is the precursor lesion of invasive endocervical adenocarcinoma.
- Dyskaryosis is the cytological term used in the UK to describe the abnormal cell changes seen in cervical samples taken from women with cervical neoplasia.
- False positives and false negatives are known pitfalls in cervical cytology, and arise mainly because of limitations in cytologists' microscopy skills and decision-making processes. Effective education, training, and quality assurance procedures are an integral part of any cervical screening programme and are crucial in minimizing interpretive errors.
- Colposcopy is the means by which potentially significant cytological abnormalities are followed up and, if necessary, treated.
- Effective treatment of cervical precancer is pivotal to a successful screening programme. Many years of experience and careful follow-up have demonstrated that excisional and destructive forms of treatment are both extremely effective and significantly reduce the future risk for cervical cancer.
- Treatment of invasive cervical cancer may involve hysterectomy, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, or a combination of these.