

Title:	Human Papillomavirus Testing by the Hybrid Capture II test for Cervical Screening, May 2003
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Reference:	MSAC reference 12d, Assessment report, ISBN 06 4282 2514, ISSN 1443-7120, http://www.msac.gov.au/

Aim

To assess the safety, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of human papillomavirus testing by the Hybrid Capture II (HC-II) test for cervical screening as either a stand-alone screening test or combined with screening by cytology.

Conclusions and results

Safety No risks were associated with the test itself, although the safety issues are the same as those for Pap smears because the method of collecting cellular material is the same for both.

Effectiveness There is insufficient evidence that HPV testing is effective in detecting high-grade cervical lesions when used as either a stand-alone screening test or combined with screening by cytology.

Cost-effectiveness Due to insufficient evidence of clinical effectiveness, an economic evaluation could not be performed.

Recommendations

There is insufficient evidence to support public funding of HPV testing as a stand-alone screening test or as an adjunct to cervical cytology screening.

Method

MSAC conducted a systematic review of medical literature using the Cochrane Library, Medline, PreMedline, Current Contents, Biological Abstracts, CINAHL and EMBASE databases from January 1998 - October 2002 to identify the accuracy and precision of the tests and their usefulness in terms of patient outcomes in the context of the current Australian cervical screening guidelines. Assessment of clinical effectiveness relied on two primary studies, while assessment of cost-effectiveness was based on review of a submitted economic model.

Further research

Three trials currently underway will enrol more than 43,000 women; results are expected over the next three years: HART (UK), ARTISTIC (UK) and CCaST (Canada).