EFC XI EUROPEAN CONGRESS
European Federation for Colposcopy and Cervical Cancer Prevention
Bucharest, Romania | 14-17 October 2026

ROLE OF SELF-SAMPLING IN POPULATION-BASED CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING: EXPERIENCE IN A HIGH-INCOME COUNTRY REGION

Castro Díaz, Covadonga; Rodríguez Camacho, Elena; Alcalde Rubio, María; Gomez Amorín, Ángel; Arias Baltar, Efigenia

INTRODUCTION:

Screening population-based programmes using HPV DNA testing have resulted in clear reductions in cervical cancer incidence and mortality. Optimizing participation rates increases effectiveness of the screening strategy. In this regard, implementing self-sampling can have a positive impact on women's participation in these programs.

METHODS:

This study aims to analyse the role of self-sampling in the implementation of population-based cervical cancer screening programme in Galicia, Spain. Target population were 621,303 women aged 35 to 65. Upon receiving the invitation, women chose their participation method: either self-sampling or sample collection by a healthcare professional. Midwives could also actively recruit them as a third participation option. Screening method was HPV testing. The data analysed cover the first two years of the widespread implementation of the program (December 2023 to December 2025).

RESULTS:

A total of 397,877 women were invited to participate (64% invitation coverage): 275,247 by direct invitation and 122,630 through active recruitment. Of those invited directly by the program, 157,451 (57.2%) agreed to participate: 67,232 (42.7%) by appointment and 90,129 (57.3%) by self-collection.

	INVITATIONS (CRIIS) Appointment + Self-sampling	ACTIVE RECRUITMENT (Midwives)	GLOBAL INVITATION
Nº	275.247	122.630	397.877
%	44,3%	19,7%	64%

	INVITATIONS (CRIIS)	ATTENDED	APPOINTMENT	SELF-SAMPLING
Nº	275.247	157.451	67.232	90.129
%	44,3%	57,2%	42,7%	57,3%

The total number of tests administered was 248,872 (62.5% effective participation), of which: 67,519 were self-collection (74.8%), 53,267 were scheduled appointments (79.2%), and 126,964 were actively recruited by midwives. The overall positivity rate for HPV was 6.89%: 4.29% self-sampling and 5.38% in-person.

	GLOBAL INVITATION (CRIIS + RECRUITMENT)	TOTAL TEST SUBMITTED (CRIIS + RECRUITMENT)
Nº	397.877	248.872
%	64%	62,55%

EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION

	ACTIVE RECRUITMENT	APPOINTMENT	SELF-SAMPLING
Nº	126.964	53.267	67.519
%	____	79,2%	74,8%

	OVERALL POSITIVITY	ACTIVE RECRUITMENT	INVITED AND ATTENDS	
			APPOINTMENT	SELF-SAMPLING
Nº	17.165	11.353	2.866	2.900
%	6,89%	8,94%	5,38%	4,29%

CONCLUSIONS:

Self-sampling is an accessible, easy-to-use, inclusive tool with high acceptance rates that might increase participation rates and facilitate recruitment in cervical cancer screening programmes.