

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This descriptive research aimed to determine frequency of Pap smear test attendance, the levels of health beliefs concerning cervical cancer in Muslim women, and to examine the relationship between their health beliefs and their Pap smear test attendance. One hundred Muslim women who visited the primary health care center at Chana Hospital, Songkhla province were selected by purposive sampling. Data was collected during August and September 2003. The subjects were aged 35 - 65 years. The questionnaires consisted of 3 parts. These were demographic data, Pap smear test attendance, and health beliefs concerning cervical cancer. Data was analyzed by using the Statistical Package Social Sciences 10.0 for Windows.

The results revealed that 61 percent of the Muslim women had not received a Pap smear test. Of those who had received the test, only 13 percent have the test as part of their annual check - up. The mean of total health belief scores was at moderate level. Considering the subtotal scores, the mean score of perceived threat was at moderate level, perceived barriers was at low level, and perceived benefits was at high level. There was a significant relationship between total health belief scores and the frequency of Pap smear test attendance ( $r = .27, p < 0.05$ ). It was also found that the perceived threat of cervical cancer, perceived benefit, and perceived barrier of Pap smear test scores were significantly correlated to frequency of the Pap smear test ( $r = .23, p < 0.01$ ;  $r = .32, p < 0.05$ , and  $r = -.021, p < 0.05$  respectively ).

### **Limitations of study**

1. The purposive sampling method was used in this study and the subjects were selected from one setting and in the hospital. This limited the study to generalization of the finding to Muslim women.

2. The closed – end questions were used in this study. This limited the subjects to express their actual feelings and thoughts. Therefore, some meanings of Muslim’s beliefs would not be expressed.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

The findings from this study provide several important implications for the nursing profession including nursing practices, nursing education, and nursing research.

#### **1. Nursing practice**

The result of the study suggests that health care providers should increase Muslim women’s awareness about their risk for cervical cancer. Muslim women need to have an increase about their understanding of cervical cancer screening as a preventive health care measure and be encouraged to have a Pap smear test. In response to this encouragement, information about cervical cancer and Pap smear test should be provided through the mass media, both in the clinical and community settings. This might increase the accessibility to preventive health care for Muslim women. Finally, health care personnel can facilitate the use of Pap smear test attendance and decrease the risk of cervical cancer by integrating the teachings of Islam. For example, emphasizing Islamic mandates relating to individual responsibility and health prevention might help to increase participation in Pap smear

test. Encouraging Muslim women to observe Islamic law in which extramarital and premarital sexual relationships are prohibited would decrease the cervical cancer rate among Muslim women.

## **2. Nursing education**

This research can be part of a database for creating educational programs related to cervical cancer and Pap smear testing for nurse educators to effectively promote proficiency of Pap smear tests among Muslim women. Nursing intervention models are suggested for focusing on accurately perceived threat of cervical cancer to increase the number of women who attend for Pap smear testing,

## **3. Nursing researcher**

The result indicates that Muslim women are a vulnerable population at an increased risk of cervical cancer, because the risk factors associated with cervical cancer and that their use of Pap smear testing is inadequate.

Future research needs to focus on:

1. Strategic to increase Muslim women's awareness of the risks of cervical cancer
2. Create awareness among health care personnel concerning the low rates of Pap smear tests on Muslim women
3. Educate health care personnel on the pertinent religious values and beliefs of Muslim women related to health practices
4. Replication of this study in other setting with randomized and larger sample sizes is recommended.

5. Use qualitative research method to explore whether any religious beliefs influencing health beliefs might provide a better understanding of health belief concerning cervical cancer and Pap smear test attendance among Muslim women.