Summary

This is an important study particularly for scientists and researchers interested in this field. It was aimed to understand reasons why some women aged 50-64 years from hard-to-reach groups with poor awareness and understanding of cervical screening. The study further sought to examine why some women had not decided not to continue going for screening, having previously taken part. Using Frame Analysis for qualitative data analysis, the researchers present the key findings from the hard to reach female population related to the attitudes that were linked to cervical screening.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The beginning sentence in on page 4, line 2, while it is good to provide the statistics for England, it would be good to relate to the statistics providing a global perspective. For instance, if each 3000 women are diagnosed annually what is that ratio with regard to global rates?
2. Relatedly, in the background section it would be good to provide statistics and information related to the deaths or fatalities of Human papillomavirus (HPV). What is the magnitude, is it a problem in the country? Such information would perhaps explain why women feel scared or uncomfortable to have the screening results. Also it would be good to know the resulted statistics for some that have been screened in the country or global statistics whether they have been negative or positive.

3. Please double check if the reference numbers should be after the full stop. Through out the document this needs to be checked if is agreeable with the journal then you can proceed. Otherwise, on page 4, onwards Line 53 and 57 where do the reference belong, is it with the new sentence or the sentence that is completed with a full stop (.)?

4. What study design was used for this research? In the methods section there is no mention of the study design apart from indicating the method - of data collection that is the focus group discussions. You begin with the recruitment of the study participants. Use the standard format used by the journal requirements in the presentation of the methods sections.

5. What is the justification for the selection of only 6 focus groups? how did you identify/determine that you reached saturation during the data collection process.

6. Please include page numbers on your document, which are lacking all through. Also follow the journal guidelines for further review and editing for improvement of this manuscript. https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/submission-guidelines

7. While the title shows attitudes to cervical screening among older women, the researchers did not classify whether all the submissions were attitudinal, negative or positive attitudes.

Minor Essential Revisions

Abstract

1. The use of poor knowledge: what was the classification for knowledge? What justification or measure did you use relating to the qualitative findings? Who had good or higher knowledge? What is poor knowledge as defined in your study?
Methods

1. What is the justification for the selection of the 50-60 year olds non white British? The explanation for the ethnic minority non white British group does not seem to come out well.

2. What was the composition of the focus group discussions? What is the number of participants per group?

3. What languages were used during data collection? Where it required say for interpreters during data collection and moderation, were other languages used other than English?

4. How did you control for bias given the multiplicity of ethnic groups/languages represented from the difference countries highlighted as indicated on page 6, line 34-37 referring to "were from a range of ethnic backgrounds including Bangladeshi, Pakistani, African, Caribbean and White British"

Results

Information regarding the languages used in the data collection should be transferred to the section on focus group discussion.

Did it matter the duration the participants had spent in England from the time they had moved there to the time of the survey? Could this have had an influence on the results in any way or not?

Would be good to know the number of times / frequency or if the theme identified was running through all the focus group discussions. For instance, for the findings on line 6, discomfort and embarrassment, was it from all the 6 FGDs?

Nothing is mentioned if the FGD participants were in agreement with the submission of one participant in the group. Line 11 to 12 show one of the participants mentioned "It's a very sensitive area, the private area, for every woman", (P6, group 6).

On a lighter note, extreme negative experiences-Line 26 presents well the magnitude of the problem as highlighted in Line 26, Page 10. It would be good to have similar presentations in some of the write up and quotations made.

Page 9, line 22 there are typos, please correct them.
In the discussion section, it would be good to show how why this study is unique and very important for the study population with regard to other studies that have been done elsewhere. Would we have had different findings if the methodologies changed? Say if we used quantitative methods?

Recommendation:

This is a good article that provides key information that could be used for program intervention regarding these special population groups. I recommend the article to be published on completion of reviewer comments

Quality of written English

Does not require proof reading. The manuscript is well written.

Declaration of competing interests

I declare that I have no competing interests.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable
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