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# Socioeconomic disparities in uterine cervical cancer burden; an ecological assessment of global incidence and mortality patterns by human development index in 2022

**Sajad Ataei Azimi[1], Ahmadreza Siyasari[2], Sara Abutalebi Nasrabad[3], Arvin Saboori[4], Roya Biglarifar[5], Shirin Shamsghahfarokhi[6], Zahra Hamidi Madani[7], Saba Bazzazi[8], Azar Baradaran[9,10*]**

[1]Hematology-Oncology Department, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran
[2]Department of Medical Surgical Nursing, Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Zabol University of Medical Sciences, Iran
[3]Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences, Yazd, Iran
[4]Department of Anesthesia, Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences, Bandar Abbas, Iran
[5]Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, School of Medicine, Iran University of Medical Sciences: Tehran, Iran
[6]Department of Internal Medicine, School of Medicine, Hajar Hospital, Shahrekord University of Medical Sciences, Shahrekord, Iran
[7]Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Reproductive Health Research Center, School of Medicine, Guilan University of Medical Sciences, Rasht, Iran
[8]Preventative Gynecology Research Center, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran
[9]Department of Pathology, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran
[10]Infectious Diseases and Tropical Medicine Research Center, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran

***Correspondence to**
Prof. Azar Baradaran, Email: azarbaradaran@yahoo.com and azarbaradaran@med.mui.ac.ir

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Uterine cervical cancer remains a major public health concern worldwide, ranking as the fourth most common cancer among women. Despite advances in prevention and treatment, significant disparities in incidence and mortality persist, largely reflecting underlying socioeconomic inequalities. The human development index (HDI), a composite measure of life expectancy, education, and per capita income, offers a critical lens for examining these disparities on a global scale.

**Objectives:** This ecological study aimed to investigate the patterns of cervical cancer incidence and mortality across countries stratified by HDI in 2022, highlighting the persistent influence of socioeconomic development on disease burden.

**Materials and Methods:** This ecological study utilized data from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the Global Cancer Observatory (GLOBOCAN) project for the year 2022. Incidence and mortality statistics for uterine cervical cancer were extracted for countries worldwide and stratified according to the HDI categories. Comparative analyses were then performed to evaluate differences in uterine cancer incidence and mortality across varying HDI levels.

**Results:** The results showed that countries classified as very high HDI demonstrated the most favorable outcomes in the context of uterine cervical cancer, displaying the smallest proportions of both newly diagnosed cases and resultant mortality. Conversely, as the HDI categorization shifts downwards, transitioning from the designation of high to medium, and subsequently to low, a corresponding and gradual escalation becomes evident in the rates of both the incidence of new cervical cancer diagnoses and the rates of mortality stemming from this particular disease.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, the significant socioeconomic disparities identified in uterine cervical cancer incidence and mortality underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions in lower HDI countries. Addressing these inequities through improved access to prevention, screening, and treatment is essential to reduce the disproportionate burden and promote global health equity in cervical cancer outcomes.

## Introduction

Uterine cervical cancer represents a significant global health burden, with an estimated 604,000 new cases and 342,000 deaths reported worldwide in 2020, making it the fourth most common cancer among women globally (1-3). This malignancy predominantly affects women in low- and middle-income countries, with the highest burden concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and south-central Asia (4,5). This cancer is largely driven by persistent infection with high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV) types, most notably HPV-16 and HPV-18, which together account for roughly 70% of cases (6-8). Despite the biological necessity of HPV, the transition from infection to invasive disease is modulated by host immunity,

**Key point**

The ecological study reveals significant socioeconomic disparities in uterine cervical cancer, with countries of lower human development index bearing a disproportionately higher burden of incidence and mortality. These findings underscore the crucial influence of socioeconomic development on health outcomes, highlighting that lower human development index regions face greater challenges related to cervical cancer.

reproductive factors, sexual behavior, smoking, and co-infections (6,9). Since cytology and HPV testing can detect precancerous lesions years before invasion, cervical cancer serves as a paradigm of a malignancy that is both highly preventable and, when caught early, highly curable. Nevertheless, gaps in vaccine uptake, screening coverage, and timely treatment have slowed progress toward the World Health Organization's (WHO's) elimination target of fewer than 4 cases per 100,000 women in a year (10).

Recent Global Cancer Observatory (GLOBOCAN) updates show that cervical cancer remains a top public health challenge; a granular 2020 assessment documented a three-fold incidence differential and a six-fold mortality differential between low- and very high-human development index (HDI) countries (10). Multivariate ecological models attribute over half of the global variance in mortality to HDI and poverty alone (11). Within countries, women residing in poorer households, rural districts, or minority racial/ethnic groups are more likely to present with advanced disease, receive less definitive surgery, and experience worse overall survival (12,13). Decomposition of screening data from sub-Saharan Africa shows that educational attainment, urban residence, and household wealth collectively explain more than 75% of the pro-rich inequality in cervical cancer screening uptake (14). These findings underscore that socioeconomic context shapes both primary prevention (HPV vaccination), secondary prevention (screening), and tertiary care (access to oncology services). Consequently, addressing cervical cancer inequities demands integrated strategies that couple biomedical interventions with policies targeting social and economic marginalization.

Collectively, these lines of evidence justify the present ecological assessment of incidence and mortality patterns across HDI categories in 2022. By quantifying the scale of socioeconomic disparities, the study aims to inform policy initiatives aligned with the WHO cervical cancer elimination agenda and the broader pursuit of global health equity.

## Objectives

This study aimed to examine global socioeconomic disparities in the burden of uterine cervical cancer by analyzing incidence and mortality patterns in relation to the HDI for the year 2022. By conducting an ecological assessment based on data from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the research seeks to identify how socioeconomic development, as measured by HDI, influences the distribution of cervical cancer outcomes across countries. The objective is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between socioeconomic status and cervical cancer burden, thereby informing targeted public health strategies and resource allocation to address observed inequalities.

## Materials and Methods

### *Study design*

This study employed an ecological design to investigate the relationship between HDI levels and uterine cervical cancer burden using data from the IARC and GLOBOCAN project for 2022. In this ecological study design, the unit of analysis was countries rather than individuals, with aggregate incidence and mortality data stratified according to HDI classifications (very high, high, medium, and low)

### *Inclusion and exclusion criteria*

Inclusion criteria include all countries with available uterine cervical cancer incidence and mortality data in the IARC and GLOBOCAN 2022 database, countries with established HDI classifications (very high, high, medium, and low HDI), and nations with age-standardized rates (ASRs) per 100,000 women to facilitate valid cross-country comparisons. Exclusion criteria involved countries with incomplete or missing cervical cancer incidence and mortality data for the year 2022, territories or regions without official HDI classifications from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), countries with unreliable or poor-quality cancer registry data as indicated by GLOBOCAN data quality assessments, and nations where ASRs could not be calculated due to insufficient demographic information.

### *Data collection*

Data for this ecological study were collected from the IARC and GLOBOCAN project for the year 2022. Uterine cervical cancer incidence and mortality statistics were extracted for each country using these publicly available and internationally recognized datasets. Countries were then stratified according to their HDI levels, including very high, high, medium, and low, based on UNDP classifications. Age-standardized rates per 100,000 women were used to facilitate valid cross-country comparisons (https://gco.iarc.who.int/).

### *Outcomes*

The primary outcome of this ecological study was to assess and compare the incidence rates of uterine cervical cancer across countries categorized by different levels of the HDI using data from GLOBOCAN for the year 2022. The secondary outcome involved evaluating and contrasting the mortality rates associated with uterine cervical cancer among these HDI-stratified countries. Collectively, these outcomes aimed to elucidate the extent of global

disparities in uterine cervical cancer burden as influenced by socioeconomic development, providing insight into how incidence and mortality patterns of cervical cancer vary according to HDI classification.

### *Data analysis*

To analyze data, we reported the incidence and mortality of uterine cervical cancer by calculating the global number of new cases and mortality in 2022. For data calculation, two indicators, including ASR per 100,000 women and total number were used. To assess the linear correlation between uterine cervical cancer incidence and mortality with HDI levels, the Scatter analysis was employed.

## Results

The global distribution of uterine cervical cancer incidence and mortality demonstrated clear variations across countries with different levels of socioeconomic development, as measured by the HDI. Countries classified as having very high HDI exhibited the lowest rates of both new cases and deaths from cervical cancer. As the HDI classification decreases, from high to medium and then to low, there is a progressive increase in both the incidence and mortality rates associated with this disease. This pattern highlights a marked disparity, with lower HDI countries experiencing a disproportionately greater burden of cervical cancer (Table 1 and Figure 1).

The results indicated that, in countries classified as having very high HDI, the incidence of uterine cervical cancer tends to be lower, with nations such as Australia, Austria, Canada, and the United States exemplifying this trend. High HDI countries, including Albania, Algeria,

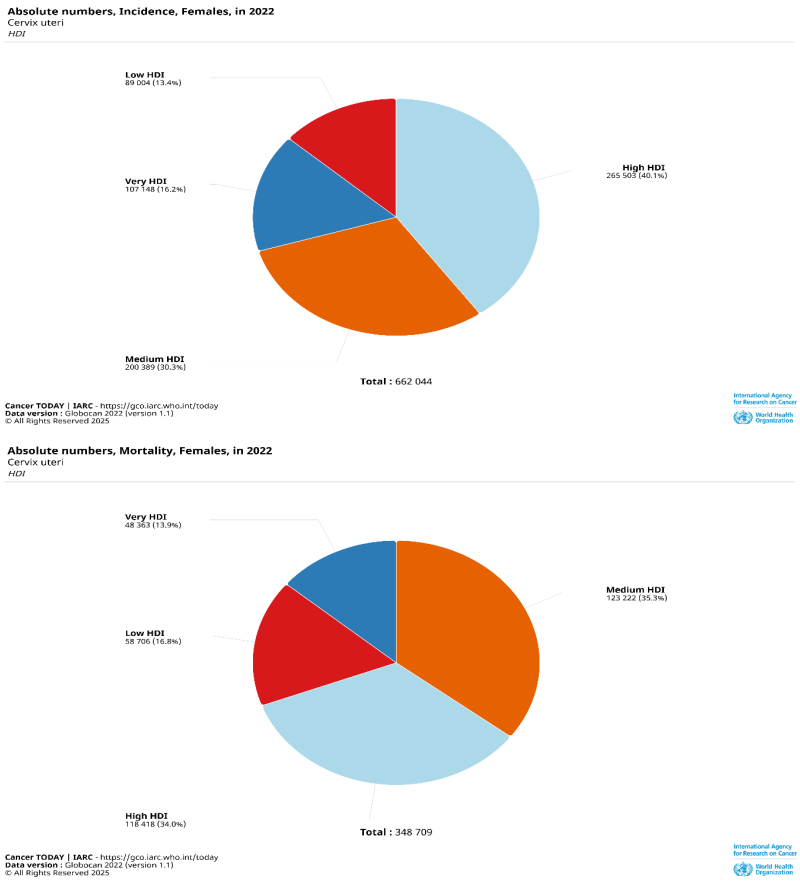


**Figure 1.** The incidence and mortality of uterine cervical cancer based on HDI classification. Reprinted with permission from IARC/WHO. Copyright (2025). (https://gco.iarc.fr/today/en/dataviz/pie?mode=population&group_populations=0&populations=981_982_983_984&cancers=23).

**Table 1.** The incidence and mortality of uterine cervical cancer according to global socioeconomic distribution in 2022

| HDI classification | Incidence | | | Mortality | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ASR (World) | Crude rate | Total (N) | ASR (World) | Crude rate | Total (N) |
| Very HDI country | 9.3 | 12.9 | 107148 | 3.3 | 5.8 | 48363 |
| High HDI country | 14.1 | 19.4 | 265503 | 5.9 | 8.7 | 118418 |
| Medium HDI country | 18 | 18.1 | 200389 | 11.2 | 11.1 | 123222 |
| Low HDI country | 23.8 | 14.8 | 89004 | 16.3 | 9.8 | 58706 |

HDI: Human development index; N: Number; ASR: Age-standardized rate. Reprinted with permission from IARC/WHO. Copyright (2025). (https://gco.iarc.fr/today/en/dataviz/pie?mode=population&group_populations=0&populations=981_982_983_984&cancers=23)

and Azerbaijan, generally exhibit slightly higher rates than their very high HDI counterparts but still maintain relatively moderate levels. In contrast, countries with medium HDI, such as Angola, Bangladesh, and Bolivia, experience a noticeably greater incidence, reflecting more limited access to preventive measures and healthcare infrastructure. The most pronounced burden is observed in low HDI countries like Burundi, the Central African Republic, and Malawi, where cervical cancer is far more prevalent (Table 2 and Figure 2).

The distribution of uterine cervical cancer mortality rates across countries with different levels of HDI reveals a marked disparity that closely mirrors socioeconomic status. Countries with very high HDI (e.g, United Kingdom, Bahrain, Belgium, Saudi Arabia and Canada) generally experience the lowest mortality rates from cervical cancer, reflecting the benefits of advanced healthcare infrastructure, comprehensive screening programs, and access to effective treatment. In contrast, countries with high and medium HDI (e.g, Jordan, Iran, China, India and Mexico) present a more varied picture, with some nations achieving relatively low mortality rates while others still face significant challenges in cervical cancer control, likely due to differences in healthcare

**Table 2.** The distribution of uterine cervical cancer incidence rates in countries with different HDI levels

| Socioeconomic classification | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very HDI | | | High HDI | | | Medium HDI | | | Low HDI | | |
| Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) | Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) | Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) | Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) |
| Argentina | 16.78 | 4696 | Albania | 8.7 | 171 | Angola | 30.4 | 2823 | Afghanistan | 10.27 | 1218 |
| Australia | 5.25 | 898 | Algeria | 7.96 | 1799 | Bangladesh | 11.28 | 9640 | Burundi | 43.58 | 1457 |
| Austria | 5.87 | 409 | Azerbaijan | 8.18 | 547 | Bhutan | 13.56 | 49 | Central African Republic | 21.77 | 295 |
| Bahamas | 15.15 | 42 | Armenia | 6.83 | 156 | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | 38.65 | 2213 | Chad | 23.51 | 1111 |
| Bahrain | 2.66 | 18 | Barbados | 13.75 | 36 | Botswana | 39.06 | 454 | Congo, Democratic Republic of | 32.91 | 8705 |
| Belgium | 6.3 | 531 | Bosnia Herzegovina | 12.33 | 263 | Belize | 17.27 | 34 | Benin | 18.12 | 701 |
| Brunei Darussalam | 20.01 | 53 | Brazil | 12.69 | 18715 | Solomon Islands | 26.15 | 72 | Ethiopia | 22.28 | 8168 |
| Belarus | 9.25 | 668 | Bulgaria | 15.41 | 877 | Myanmar | 21.44 | 7028 | Eritrea | 16.41 | 196 |
| Canada | 6.63 | 1730 | Sri Lanka | 9.18 | 1579 | Cambodia | 15.24 | 1274 | Djibouti | 16.53 | 71 |
| Chile | 11.34 | 1559 | China | 13.83 | 150659 | Cameroon | 33.11 | 2525 | The Republic of the Gambia | 39.37 | 325 |
| Costa Rica | 10.6 | 341 | Colombia | 13.68 | 4570 | Cape Verde | 16.07 | 46 | Guinea | 55.01 | 2551 |
| Croatia | 8.25 | 272 | Cuba | 12.83 | 1122 | Comoros | 52.01 | 163 | Haiti | 16.59 | 869 |
| Cyprus | 6.99 | 62 | Dominican Republic | 15.63 | 967 | Congo, Republic of | 22.32 | 397 | Lesotho | 60.49 | 598 |
| Czechia | 8.01 | 658 | Ecuador | 17.66 | 1792 | El Salvador | 15.19 | 627 | Liberia | 39.61 | 717 |
| Denmark | 9.74 | 373 | Fiji | 34.97 | 165 | Equatorial Guinea | 33.23 | 127 | Madagascar | 41.77 | 4060 |
| Estonia | 11.81 | 121 | Gabon | 32.48 | 271 | Ghana | 27 | 3072 | Malawi | 70.85 | 4701 |
| Finland | 4.63 | 179 | Gaza Strip and West Bank | 3.12 | 59 | Guatemala | 21.49 | 1761 | Mali | 43.14 | 2436 |
| France (metropolitan) | 6.55 | 3185 | Guyana | 30.31 | 129 | Honduras | 19.5 | 916 | Mozambique | 47.79 | 5456 |
| Georgia | 10.35 | 330 | Indonesia | 23.31 | 36964 | India | 17.71 | 127526 | Niger | 9.31 | 624 |
| Germany | 7.14 | 4544 | Iran, Islamic Republic of | 2.53 | 1265 | Iraq | 2.18 | 311 | Nigeria | 26.18 | 13676 |
| Greece | 5.46 | 473 | Jamaica | 20.4 | 376 | Côte d'Ivoire | 32.04 | 2360 | Pakistan | 5.4 | 4762 |
| Hungary | 12.62 | 964 | Jordan | 3.19 | 133 | Kenya | 32.83 | 5845 | Guinea-Bissau | 34.3 | 224 |
| Iceland | 9.37 | 19 | Lebanon | 3.59 | 144 | Kyrgyzstan | 14.14 | 479 | Rwanda | 18.92 | 866 |
| Ireland | 7.47 | 242 | Libya | 8 | 278 | Lao People's Democratic Republic | 11.95 | 401 | Senegal | 34.26 | 2064 |
| Italy | 4.99 | 2479 | Mexico | 13.18 | 10348 | Morocco | 11.97 | 2644 | South Sudan | 21.42 | 749 |
| Japan | 12.53 | 10958 | Mongolia | 20.19 | 361 | Namibia | 33.45 | 350 | Sudan | 8.6 | 1234 |
| Kazakhstan | 15.52 | 1824 | Republic of Moldova | 14.18 | 420 | Nepal | 14.15 | 2169 | Togo | 19.05 | 511 |

**Table 2.** Continued

| Socioeconomic classification | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very HDI | | | High HDI | | | Medium HDI | | | Low HDI | | |
| Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) | Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) | Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) | Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) |
| Korea, Republic of | 8.59 | 3397 | Paraguay | 30.61 | 1115 | Vanuatu | 18.15 | 23 | Uganda | 53.76 | 6938 |
| Kuwait | 3.06 | 61 | Peru | 23.9 | 4809 | Nicaragua | 20.61 | 721 | Tanzania, United Republic of | 64.75 | 10868 |
| Latvia | 16.91 | 238 | Saint Lucia | 15.72 | 20 | Papua New Guinea | 27.77 | 1053 | Burkina Faso | 15.88 | 988 |
| Lithuania | 13.69 | 296 | Viet Nam | 7.12 | 4612 | Philippines | 15.51 | 8549 | Yemen | 2.14 | 212 |
| Luxembourg | 4.35 | 22 | South Africa | 33.18 | 10532 | Timor-Leste | 14.75 | 77 | | | |
| Malaysia | 10.33 | 1913 | Suriname | 24.2 | 81 | Sao Tome and Principe | 18.77 | 14 | | | |
| Malta | 4.22 | 13 | Tunisia | 5.25 | 414 | Zimbabwe | 68.2 | 3520 | | | |
| Mauritius | 12.9 | 136 | Turkmenistan | 14.1 | 451 | Eswatini | 95.89 | 417 | | | |
| Montenegro | 11.96 | 58 | Ukraine | 15.24 | 5163 | Syrian Arab Republic | 2.51 | 206 | | | |
| Oman | 6.44 | 90 | North Macedonia | 6.72 | 107 | Tajikistan | 6.64 | 277 | | | |
| The Netherlands | 6.67 | 756 | Egypt | 2.77 | 1302 | Venezuela | 22.73 | 3965 | | | |
| New Zealand | 4.93 | 149 | Uzbekistan | 14.81 | 2654 | Zambia | 71.5 | 3640 | | | |
| Norway | 10.91 | 376 | Samoa | 13.29 | 11 | | | | | | |
| Panama | 14.46 | 371 | | | | | | | | | |
| Poland | 11.32 | 4008 | | | | | | | | | |
| Portugal | 11.08 | 897 | | | | | | | | | |
| Qatar | 4.67 | 25 | | | | | | | | | |
| Romania | 21.67 | 3368 | | | | | | | | | |
| Russian Federation | 17.56 | 18369 | | | | | | | | | |
| Saudi Arabia | 2.36 | 332 | | | | | | | | | |
| Serbia | 13.35 | 906 | | | | | | | | | |
| Singapore | 7.42 | 353 | | | | | | | | | |
| Slovakia | 12.93 | 557 | | | | | | | | | |
| Slovenia | 7.16 | 119 | | | | | | | | | |
| Spain | 5.44 | 2020 | | | | | | | | | |
| Sweden | 8.55 | 561 | | | | | | | | | |
| Switzerland | 4.08 | 269 | | | | | | | | | |
| Thailand | 14.91 | 8662 | | | | | | | | | |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 18.28 | 192 | | | | | | | | | |
| United Arab Emirates | 5.7 | 138 | | | | | | | | | |
| Türkiye | 4.75 | 2593 | | | | | | | | | |
| United Kingdom | 7.51 | 3235 | | | | | | | | | |
| United States of America | 6.32 | 13920 | | | | | | | | | |
| Uruguay | 15.94 | 377 | | | | | | | | | |

HDI: Human development index; N: Number; ASR: Age-standardized rate. Reprinted with permission from IARC/WHO. Copyright (2025). (https://gco.iarc.fr/today/en/dataviz/pie?mode=population&group_populations=0&populations=981_982_983_984&cancers=23).

access, public health policies, and resource allocation. The highest mortality rates are predominantly observed in countries with low HDI (e.g, Guinea, Malawi and Uganda), where limited healthcare resources, inadequate screening, and delayed diagnosis contribute to poor outcomes (Table 3 and Figure 3).

## Discussion

Our study results indicated that uterine cervical cancer incidence and mortality vary among countries with different levels of HDI. Very high HDI countries showed the lowest rates of both incidence and mortality of cervical cancer. With the decrease of HDI classification, from high to medium and low, we found a progressive increase in both the incidence and mortality rates associated with this disease. Our findings demonstrating an inverse relationship between HDI levels and cervical cancer incidence and mortality rates are strongly supported by

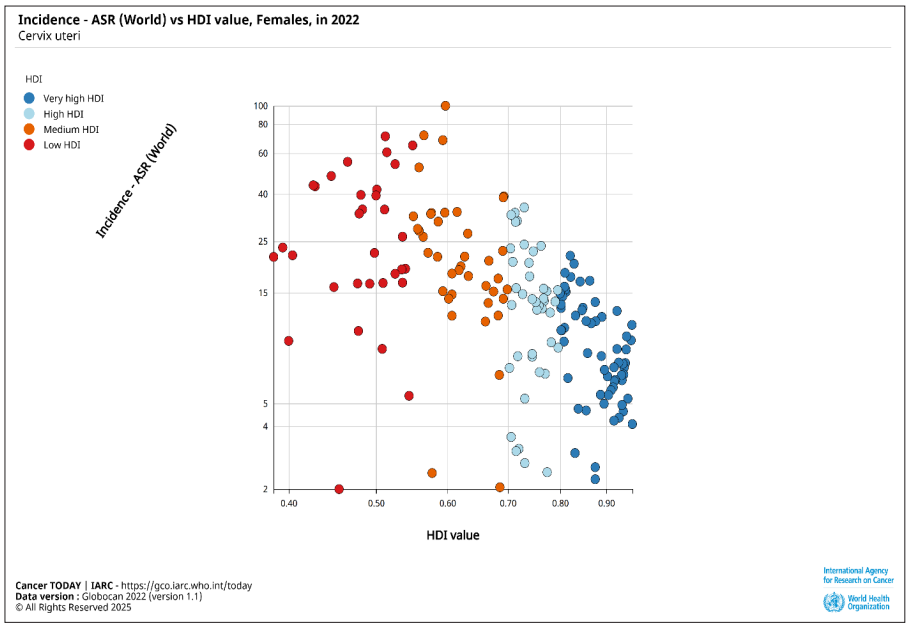


**Figure 2**. Linear correlation between uterine cervical cancer incidence rates and HDI using Scatter plot analysis. HDI: Human development index; ASR: Age-standardized rate. Reprinted with permission from IARC/WHO. Copyright (2025). (https://gco.iarc.fr/today/en/dataviz/scatter-plot?mode=population&group_populations=0&populations=981_982_983_984&cancers=23&x_indicator=hdi&color_plot=hdi&y_indicator=0).

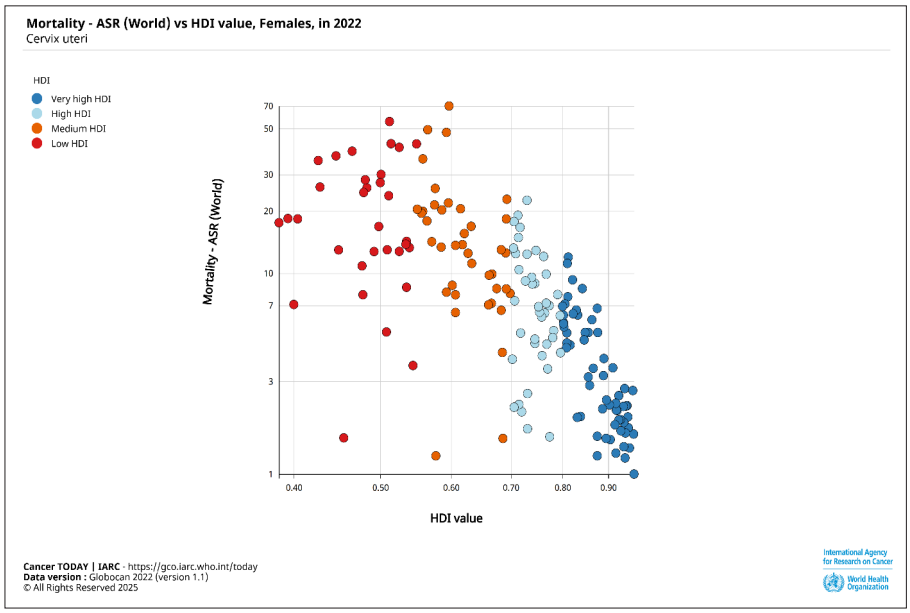


**Figure 3.** iLinear correlation between uterine cervical cancer mortality rates and HDI using Scatter plot analysis. HDI: Human development index; ASR: Age-standardized rate. Reprinted with permission from IARC/WHO. Copyright (2025). (https://gco.iarc.fr/today/en/dataviz/scatter-plot?mode=population&group_populations=0&populations=981_982_983_984&cancers=23&x_indicator=hdi&color_plot=hdi).

previous research. Singh et al conducted a comprehensive analysis using GLOBOCAN 2020 data from 185 countries, revealing that cervical cancer incidence was three times higher in countries with low HDI compared to very high HDI countries (27.2 vs 9.1 cases per 100,000 women-years), while mortality rates were six times higher (19.8 vs 3.1 deaths per 100,000 women-years) (1). Similarly, Shen et al analyzed 61 countries and found that favorable mortality-to-incidence ratios were significantly correlated with good HDI rankings and high current health expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) (15). Arbyn et al reported that approximately 570,000 cervical cancer cases and 311,000 deaths occurred globally in 2018, with the vast majority concentrated in lower-resource countries based on HDI classifications (5). These findings consistently demonstrate the persistent socioeconomic gradient in cervical cancer burden, with our results further confirming the progressive deterioration of both incidence and mortality rates as HDI classification decreases from very high to low levels.

**Table 3.** The distribution of uterine cervical cancer mortality rates in countries with different HDI levels

| Socioeconomic classification | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very HDI | | | High HDI | | | Medium HDI | | | Low HDI | | |
| Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) | Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) | Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) | Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) |
| Argentina | 8.43 | 2559 | Albania | 4.13 | 97 | Angola | 20.22 | 1715 | Afghanistan | 7.87 | 888 |
| Australia | 1.43 | 323 | Algeria | 4.58 | 1013 | Bangladesh | 7.03 | 5826 | Burundi | 35.04 | 1081 |
| Austria | 1.85 | 180 | Azerbaijan | 4.8 | 325 | Bhutan | 7.15 | 26 | Central African Republic | 18.31 | 240 |
| Bahamas | 11.96 | 33 | Armenia | 3.99 | 99 | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | 18.3 | 1138 | Chad | 18.38 | 841 |
| Bahrain | 1.63 | 8 | Barbados | 7.89 | 24 | Botswana | 22.77 | 253 | Congo, Democratic Republic of | 24.56 | 6187 |
| Belgium | 1.9 | 231 | Bosnia Herzegovina | 4.88 | 151 | Belize | 12.99 | 24 | Benin | 12.75 | 475 |
| Brunei Darussalam | 6.64 | 16 | Brazil | 6.48 | 9905 | Solomon Islands | 17.89 | 48 | Ethiopia | 16.82 | 5975 |
| Belarus | 4.36 | 371 | Bulgaria | 6.24 | 453 | Myanmar | 13.37 | 4374 | Eritrea | 12.73 | 150 |
| Canada | 2.27 | 760 | Sri Lanka | 5.27 | 946 | Cambodia | 8.1 | 670 | Djibouti | 12.98 | 54 |
| Chile | 5.17 | 825 | China | 4.54 | 55694 | Cameroon | 25.69 | 1837 | The Republic of the Gambia | 27.41 | 204 |
| Costa Rica | 4.6 | 167 | Colombia | 6.89 | 2435 | Cape Verde | 9.78 | 27 | Guinea | 38.88 | 1695 |
| Croatia | 2.87 | 138 | Cuba | 6.42 | 695 | Comoros | 35.68 | 102 | Haiti | 8.55 | 451 |
| Cyprus | 2.44 | 31 | Dominican Republic | 9.89 | 622 | Congo, Republic of | 14.2 | 248 | Lesotho | 42.27 | 413 |
| Czechia | 3.2 | 369 | Ecuador | 8.87 | 939 | El Salvador | 8.43 | 367 | Liberia | 28.28 | 478 |
| Denmark | 1.79 | 115 | Fiji | 22.51 | 105 | Equatorial Guinea | 21.86 | 76 | Madagascar | 30.02 | 2690 |
| Estonia | 3.87 | 60 | Gabon | 17.77 | 139 | Ghana | 16.85 | 1815 | Malawi | 54.07 | 3340 |
| Finland | 1.28 | 65 | Gaza Strip and West Bank | 2.32 | 37 | Guatemala | 12.48 | 973 | Mali | 26.09 | 1431 |
| France (metropolitan) | 2.31 | 1530 | Guyana | 14.87 | 65 | Honduras | 15.55 | 669 | Mozambique | 36.91 | 4000 |
| Georgia | 5.77 | 210 | Indonesia | 13.22 | 20708 | India | 11.15 | 79906 | Niger | 7.06 | 440 |
| Germany | 2.28 | 2071 | Iran, Islamic Republic of | 1.62 | 743 | Iraq | 1.59 | 216 | Nigeria | 14.25 | 7093 |
| Greece | 2.21 | 260 | Jamaica | 12.44 | 236 | Côte d'Ivoire | 20.38 | 1461 | Pakistan | 3.58 | 3069 |
| Hungary | 4.76 | 482 | Jordan | 2.14 | 84 | Kenya | 21.38 | 3591 | Guinea-Bissau | 25.87 | 157 |
| Iceland | 2.71 | 8 | Lebanon | 2.25 | 93 | Kyrgyzstan | 8.4 | 278 | Rwanda | 13.79 | 609 |
| Ireland | 2.29 | 89 | Libya | 5.14 | 169 | Lao People's Democratic Republic | 6.46 | 200 | Senegal | 23.7 | 1327 |
| Italy | 1.59 | 1156 | Mexico | 6.15 | 4909 | Morocco | 6.62 | 1468 | South Sudan | 17.55 | 593 |
| Japan | 2.56 | 3864 | Mongolia | 9.55 | 156 | Namibia | 20.48 | 203 | Sudan | 5.2 | 738 |
| Kazakhstan | 7.69 | 918 | Republic of Moldova | 7.16 | 236 | Nepal | 8.74 | 1313 | Togo | 13.3 | 334 |
| Korea, Republic of | 1.95 | 1143 | Paraguay | 16.65 | 601 | Vanuatu | 13.63 | 18 | Uganda | 40.58 | 4782 |
| Kuwait | 2.01 | 34 | Peru | 12.05 | 2545 | Nicaragua | 9.9 | 345 | Tanzania, United Republic of | 42.19 | 6832 |
| Latvia | 5.96 | 113 | Saint Lucia | 10.39 | 13 | Papua New Guinea | 19.91 | 686 | Burkina Faso | 12.96 | 775 |
| Lithuania | 6.76 | 191 | Viet Nam | 3.84 | 2571 | Philippines | 7.99 | 4380 | Yemen | 1.6 | 153 |
| Luxembourg | 1.73 | 10 | South Africa | 19.03 | 5976 | Timor-Leste | 7.86 | 37 | | | |
| Malaysia | 5.5 | 1018 | Suriname | 12.36 | 43 | Sao Tome and Principe | 13.74 | 10 | | | |
| Malta | 1.35 | 6 | Tunisia | 2.62 | 210 | Zimbabwe | 47.93 | 2318 | | | |
| Mauritius | 5.7 | 67 | Turkmenistan | 8.93 | 279 | Eswatini | 64.33 | 269 | | | |
| Montenegro | 6.28 | 32 | Ukraine | 6.97 | 2598 | Syrian Arab Republic | 1.31 | 106 | | | |
| Oman | 4.5 | 56 | North Macedonia | 3.45 | 61 | Tajikistan | 4.14 | 159 | | | |
| The Netherlands | 1.69 | 275 | Egypt | 1.77 | 820 | Venezuela | 12.54 | 2246 | | | |

**Table 3.** Continued

| Socioeconomic classification | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very HDI | | | High HDI | | | Medium HDI | | | Low HDI | | |
| Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) | Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) | Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) | Country | ASR (World) | Total (N) |
| New Zealand | 1.45 | 63 | Uzbekistan | 9.18 | 1585 | Zambia | 49.39 | 2285 | | | |
| Norway | 1.67 | 104 | Samoa | 7.36 | 6 | | | | | | |
| Panama | 7.1 | 192 | | | | | | | | | |
| Poland | 5.17 | 2188 | | | | | | | | | |
| Portugal | 3.47 | 459 | | | | | | | | | |
| Qatar | 3.15 | 13 | | | | | | | | | |
| Romania | 9.29 | 1793 | | | | | | | | | |
| Russian Federation | 6.37 | 7903 | | | | | | | | | |
| Saudi Arabia | 1.31 | 164 | | | | | | | | | |
| Serbia | 6.27 | 505 | | | | | | | | | |
| Singapore | 2.77 | 153 | | | | | | | | | |
| Slovakia | 5.17 | 276 | | | | | | | | | |
| Slovenia | 2.35 | 61 | | | | | | | | | |
| Spain | 1.57 | 802 | | | | | | | | | |
| Sweden | 2.02 | 238 | | | | | | | | | |
| Switzerland | 1.07 | 99 | | | | | | | | | |
| Thailand | 6.92 | 4576 | | | | | | | | | |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 11.15 | 122 | | | | | | | | | |
| United Arab Emirates | 3.49 | 69 | | | | | | | | | |
| Türkiye | 2.03 | 1203 | | | | | | | | | |
| United Kingdom | 1.96 | 1154 | | | | | | | | | |
| United States of America | 2.17 | 5932 | | | | | | | | | |
| Uruguay | 5.15 | 160 | | | | | | | | | |

HDI: Human development index; N: Number; ASR: Age-standardized rate. Reprinted with permission from IARC/WHO. Copyright (2025). (https://gco.iarc.fr/today/en/dataviz/pie?mode=population&group_populations=0&populations=981_982_983_984&cancers=23).

The consistent pattern observed across multiple studies, including our findings, reflects the profound impact of healthcare infrastructure, screening program availability, and socioeconomic determinants on cervical cancer outcomes. Studies have demonstrated that countries with higher HDI levels benefit from well-established population-based screening programs, HPV vaccination initiatives, and improved access to early detection and treatment services (1,16). The progressive increase in cervical cancer burden with decreasing HDI levels can be attributed to several interconnected factors: inadequate healthcare infrastructure, limited access to screening services, low HPV vaccination coverage, and delayed diagnosis leading to advanced-stage disease presentation (17,18). Research has shown that approximately 85-90% of new cervical cancer cases and deaths occur in less developed countries, highlighting the stark global inequities in cancer outcomes (16,17). The mortality-to-incidence ratio, which serves as a proxy for healthcare system effectiveness, has been consistently shown to improve with higher HDI rankings, indicating better survival outcomes in more developed nations (15). Furthermore, studies have revealed that cervical cancer screening coverage in developing countries averages only 19% compared to 63% in developed countries, contributing significantly to the observed disparities (19).

Overall, the evidence from our study and previous research establishes a clear and consistent inverse relationship between HDI levels and cervical cancer burden, with very high HDI countries demonstrating the most favorable incidence and mortality rates. This pattern reflects the critical importance of comprehensive healthcare systems, effective screening programs, and equitable access to preventive services in reducing cervical cancer burden. The findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions in low and medium HDI countries, including the implementation of cost-effective screening strategies, expansion of HPV vaccination programs, and strengthening of healthcare infrastructure to achieve the WHO's cervical cancer elimination goals (1,16). Given that cervical cancer is largely preventable through effective screening and vaccination, the persistent global disparities identified in our study and confirmed by previous research represent a significant public health

challenge that requires sustained international cooperation and resource allocation to address the inequities in cancer outcomes across different levels of human development (17,20).

## Conclusion

Our findings highlight a marked disparity in uterine cervical cancer socioeconomic patterns, with lower HDI countries experiencing a disproportionately greater burden of this cancer. The observed disparities in cervical cancer incidence and mortality across HDI categories emphasize the critical role of socioeconomic development in shaping health outcomes. The markedly higher burden of cervical cancer in countries with lower HDI underscores the urgent need for targeted public health interventions, improved access to screening and vaccination, and strengthened healthcare infrastructure in these regions. Addressing these inequalities is essential for reducing the global impact of cervical cancer and achieving more equitable health outcomes for women worldwide.

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### Authors' contribution

Conceptualization: Sajad Ataei Azimi, Saba Bazzazi, and Ahmadreza Siyasari.
Data curation: Sajad Ataei Azimi, Saba Bazzazi, and Sara Abutalebi Nasrabad.
Formal analysis: Arvin Saboori and Roya Biglarifar.
**Investigation:** Azar Baradaran, Zahra Hamidi Madani, and Roya Biglarifar.
**Methodology:** Sara Abutalebi Nasrabad and Arvin Saboori.
**Project administration:** Azar Baradaran.
**Supervision:** Sajad Ataei Azimi.
**Validation:** Ahmadreza Siyasari and Shirin Shamsghahfarokhi.
**Visualization:** Shirin Shamsghahfarokhi.
**Writing–original draft:** All authors.
**Writing–review and editing:** All authors.

### Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

### Declaration of generative artificial intelligence (AI) and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work, the authors utilized AI (Perplexity.ai and Grammarly.com) to refine grammar points and language style in writing. Subsequently, the authors thoroughly reviewed and edited the content as necessary, assuming full responsibility for the accuracy and content of the publication.

### Ethical issues

This study has been compiled based on data from the IARC-GLOBOCAN website (https://gco.iarc.who.int/). Ethical considerations related to data extraction were formally addressed, which included written correspondence via email communications with IARC officials to ensure compliance with established ethical standards. Also, the study protocol was registered on the Research Registry (unique identifying number [UIN]: researchregistry11354) website. Besides, the authors have observed ethical issues (including plagiarism, data fabrication, and double publication).

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