

Home test kits to help cut China's cervical cancer rate

Chinese scientists have developed a new home test kit that enables women to collect their own samples without having to visit a hospital, to increase early detection of cervical cancer.

The new screening technology, known as SeqHPV, was developed by China's genomics giant BGI.

Women can use the test kit to collect a sample at home and send it to the lab to check for the presence of human papilloma viruses (HPV), and obtain their results online.

"In contrast to traditional detection techniques, the home test kits can detect whether you are infected with HPV and the specific strain of HPV virus," said Liu Na, vice president of BGI.

The kit is expected to increase screening for cervical cancer in China, save medical resources and help protect women's privacy.

"The current medical resources do not meet the demands for screening all at-risk women, but home test kits can help solve this problem," said Liu.

HPV is a common virus that is believed to cause up to 70 percent of cervical cancer cases. The World Health Organization recommended women take HPV vaccines and have cervical cancer screening to help prevent the disease.

Around 85 percent of cervical cancer deaths occurred in developing countries due to limited medical resources, lack of prevention awareness as well as in adequate screening and treatment measures.

In China, nearly 400 million women aged between 25 and 64 are at risk of cervical cancer, and less than half of them have been screened for the cancer.