WORLD CONFERENCES
ENGLAND
GLOBAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND INTELLECTUAL PURSUITS
Volume 02, Issue 03, 2026

THE DIAGNOSTIC VALUE OF COLPOSCOPY IN CERVICAL PATHOLOGIES

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Annotation

This thesis evaluates the diagnostic efficacy of colposcopy in the early detection and management of cervical pathologies. By analyzing colposcopic findings and correlating them with histological outcomes, the study demonstrates that colposcopy is an indispensable clinical tool that bridges the gap between initial screening and definitive diagnosis. The findings emphasize that colposcopically directed biopsies significantly increase the accuracy of detecting cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN) and early invasive cancer, thereby optimizing patient outcomes and preventing disease progression.

Key words: colposcopy, cervical pathology, cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN), human papillomavirus (HPV), acetic acid test, directed biopsy, squamous intraepithelial lesion (SIL).

Introduction

Cervical cancer remains a significant global health challenge, predominantly driven by persistent infections with high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV) strains. While primary screening methods such as the Papanicolaou (Pap) smear and HPV DNA testing are highly effective in identifying at-risk populations, they do not provide a definitive diagnosis on their own. Colposcopy serves as the critical secondary diagnostic step, allowing for the magnified, stereoscopic visualization of the cervical epithelium and its underlying vascular network. By utilizing specific chemical agents, colposcopy helps identify the precise location, extent, and severity of precancerous lesions, directly guiding targeted biopsies. This thesis aims to elucidate the diagnostic significance of colposcopy in accurately differentiating various grades of cervical dysplasia and malignancies.

Material and methods

A retrospective clinical evaluation was conducted on a cohort of 145 reproductive-aged women who were referred for colposcopic examination due to abnormal cytology results (ASC-US, LSIL, HSIL) or positive high-risk HPV DNA tests. Standard colposcopic examinations were performed using 3-5% acetic acid and

Lugol's iodine solution (Schiller's test) to visualize the transformation zone. Lesions were systematically evaluated for major colposcopic signs: acetowhite epithelium, abnormal vascular patterns (punctation, mosaicism), and atypical vessels. Based on these visual markers, colposcopically directed punch biopsies were obtained from the most suspicious areas and submitted for definitive histopathological examination.

Result and discussion

The colposcopic examination successfully identified abnormal transformation zones in 85% of the referred patients. The application of acetic acid revealed dense acetowhite areas with coarse mosaicism and punctation in patients who were subsequently histologically confirmed to have high-grade cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN II and CIN III). The correlation between high-grade colposcopic impressions and histopathological confirmation was highly significant, demonstrating a diagnostic sensitivity of over 88%.

Furthermore, Schiller's test proved highly effective in delineating the exact margins of dysplastic lesions, as neoplastic cells lack mature intracellular glycogen and therefore appear iodine-negative (mustard yellow) against the dark brown healthy epithelium. The discussion highlights that while colposcopy is a highly sensitive visual tool, its specificity depends heavily on the clinician's expertise in pattern recognition. The true diagnostic power of colposcopy lies not merely in visual assessment, but in its ability to pinpoint the exact site with the highest grade of abnormality for a directed biopsy. This targeted approach dramatically reduces the false-negative results that are frequently associated with random or blind biopsies, ensuring that high-grade pre-invasive lesions are not missed.

Conclusion and recommendation

Colposcopy holds paramount diagnostic value in the clinical management of cervical pathologies. It acts as the definitive bridge between a positive screening test and a precise histological diagnosis, which is essential for identifying CIN and preventing its progression to invasive cervical cancer. It is highly recommended that colposcopy, immediately followed by a targeted biopsy of any visually abnormal areas, be established as the mandatory standard of care for all women presenting with high-risk HPV positivity or abnormal cytological smears. Furthermore, continuous specialized training for gynecologists in advanced colposcopic interpretation is vital to maximize the diagnostic accuracy and therapeutic impact of this indispensable modality.

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