

## THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN HERPES TYPE 2 (HSV-2) AND CERVICAL CARCINOMA — A GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY

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The association between HSV-2 and cervical carcinoma was investigated in four countries — Sri Lanka, England, Malawi and Sudan, of which previous studies had been conducted only in England.

Sera obtained from patients with cervical squamous carcinoma and dysplasia, matched controls, patients with other malignancies and patients with genital and extra genital herpetic lesions were tested by Indirect Immunofluorescence for IgG and IgA antibodies to membrane antigens (MA), and IgA antibodies to virus capsid antigens (VCA) of HSV-1 and HSV-2 specific antibody.

IgG anti-MA and IgA anti-VCA did not distinguish patients with cervical squamous carcinoma and dysplasia from controls. In contrast a significantly higher proportion of these patients possessed IgA anti-MA and HSV-2 specific antibody than controls and significantly higher titres of IgA anti-MA than controls. The prevalence and titres of IgA anti-MA in patients with non-genital squamous carcinomas, was similar to that of patients with cervical squamous carcinoma and dysplasia. This may be because IgA is directed against a cross reacting antigen on squamous carcinoma cells and HSV-2 infected cells. The implications of this finding and evidence suggestive that cervical carcinoma may be of multiple aetiology, and that aetiology may vary with age and with geographical area will be discussed.