

Perception Towards Cervical Cancer Screening and Feasibility of HPV Self-sampling in Indigenous Deaf Women: A Qualitative Study

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Background

Cervical cancer is ranked as the fourth most common cancer among women globally, and approximately 90% of cervical cancer are preventable through regular screening. Despite the well-in-place nature of Pap test, screening coverage remains suboptimal. A novel strategy, HPV self-sampling (HPVSS), is therefore required. This study explores the perspectives on cervical screening and the feasibility of HPVSS as an alternate screening strategy in Chinese deaf with a mixed study. The findings will inform the direction of future cervical cancer prevention strategies.

Aim and objectives

- To explore the perception towards cervical cancer screening in local deaf women;
- To assess the feasibility of HPV self-sampling in enhancing their cervical screening participation in local deaf women.

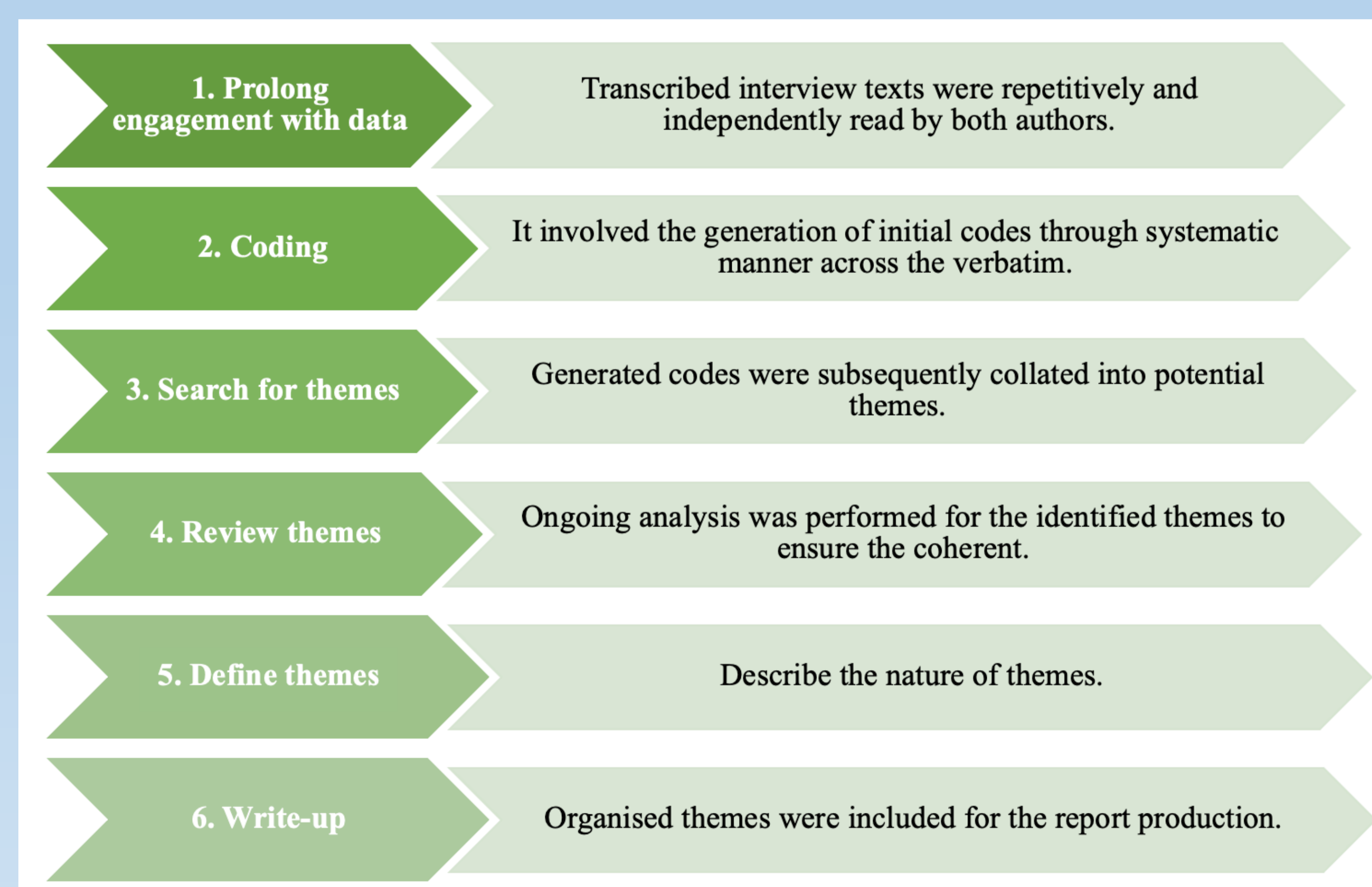
Methodology

This study employed a qualitative design and data were collected from group semi-structured interviews with 21 indigenous deaf women, recruited from community setting in various geographical districts between September 2021 and February 2023. Participants were also recruited through informant. Interviews were conducted via face-to-face and Zoom, considering restrictions of COVID-19 and personal preferences with the assistance of sign language translator. Audio recordings and field notes were performed throughout the interview to ensure data triangulation.

Eligibility criteria

- Women aged 25 or above;
- Diagnosed with various degree of hearing impairment;
- Had yet performed any types of cervical screening or not performed regular cervical screening in the previous 3 years;
- Capable to comprehend written Chinese.

Data analysis



Results

A total of three themes were identified:

- Positive acceptability towards HPVSS;
- Support required;
- Recommendation to promote HPVSS.

Majority of participants demonstrated positive acceptance towards HPVSS. Some participants expressed concerns about the reliability of HPVSS due to low confidence and health literacy. The importance of physician's explanation of specimen results was expressed as a typical comment to support self-sampling. Participants appreciated HPVSS as an alternate screening strategy to overcome the barriers of Pap test.

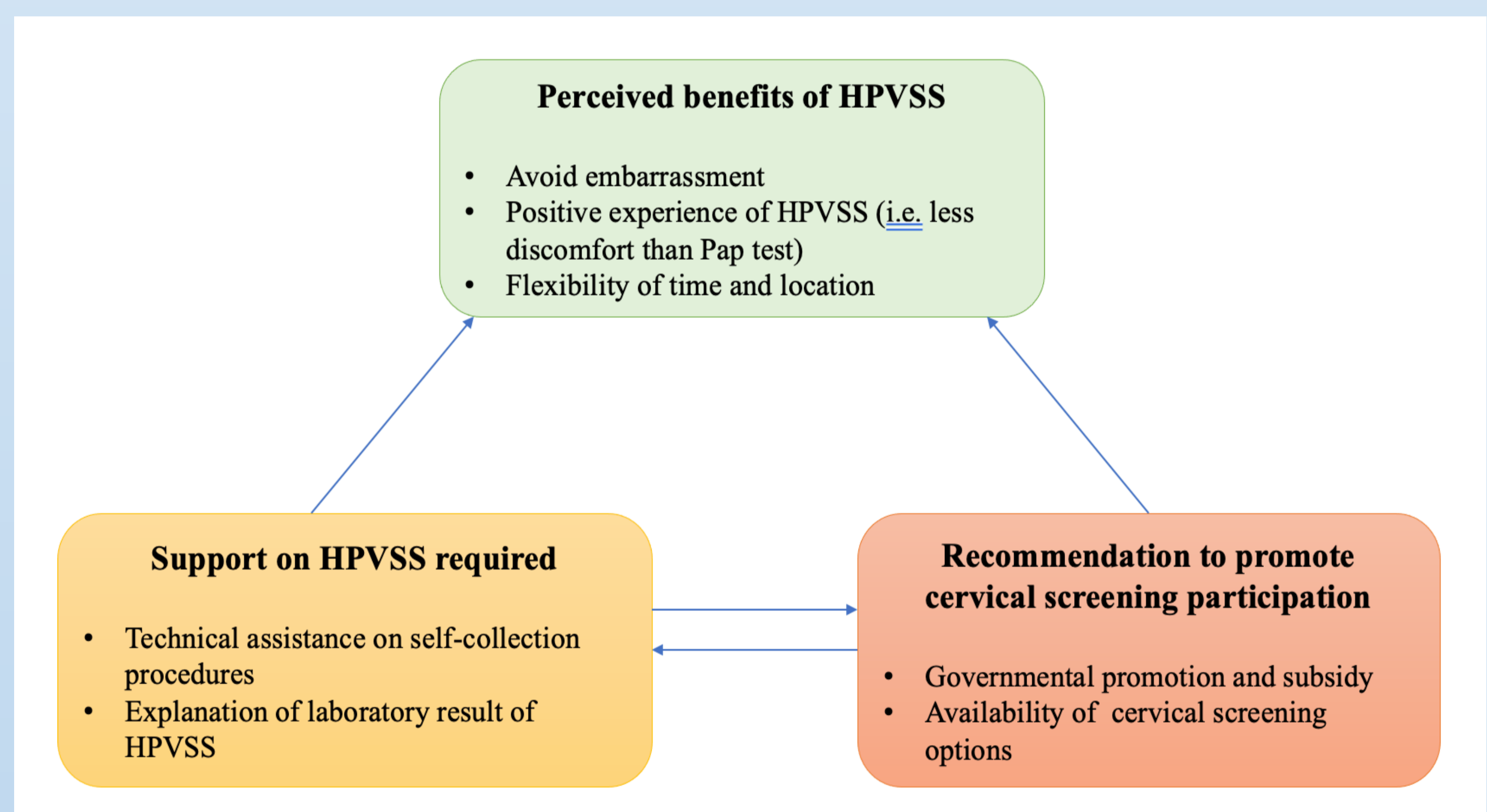


Fig: Thematic schema illustrating the interaction among the identified themes.

Table: Identified themes and selected quotes

Themes	Selected quotes
Support on HPVSS required	"It would be much better if there is real-time support, such as a person who can provide guidance when I perform the procedure."
Perceived benefits of HPVSS	"I can choose the place and time that I feel comfortable to perform self-collection." "I don't need to worry if the screening will be performed by male doctors or not." "The self-collection procedure is less uncomfortable than Pap."
Recommendation to promote cervical screening participation	"I didn't hear of self-collection before and I did not know much about the options of cervical screening." "It seems the screening fee is very expensive and I don't know where I can get the service."

Conclusion & Implication

HPVSS is an acceptable alternative to increase cervical cancer screening in the deaf population. This study is the pioneer in the local context to explore the perceptions towards HPV self-sampling as well as assess its feasibility in local deaf female. The findings of this study aim to inform the policymakers in formulating cervical preventive strategies in the local context.