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Anxiety and the Colposcopy Experience

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## **Galway Healthcare Professionals call on women to talk to their GP or practice nurse about Cervical Cancer Prevention**

**Thursday, 29th November** – Speaking at a public meeting at the Westwood Hotel, healthcare professionals encouraged women to get proactive and speak to their GP or practice nurse about their cervical health. Despite the fact that cervical cancer is now a largely preventable disease, a recent study showed that 31% of women in the Connaught/Ulster region (aged 25+) do not go for regular smear tests (at least one in the past 3 years).<sup>1</sup> Although eight women died of the disease in this region last year,<sup>2</sup> 64% of local women (aged 25+) said that they did not consider themselves at risk of contracting cervical cancer.<sup>1</sup>

Speaking at the meeting entitled “Cervical Cancer – Prevention For All Women”, Clinical Midwife Specialist, Maura Molloy said, “All women have to ensure they are taking responsibility for their cervical health and start asking questions about cervical cancer. Every woman should know and understand what causes this disease and even more importantly how it can now be prevented. Many women still don’t understand that cervical cancer is for example not hereditary and why they may be at risk. Getting vaccinated and continuing to have regular smear tests is the most effective way of preventing cervical cancer so I would strongly urge women to make the time to talk to their GP or practice nurse about how they can best protect themselves.” A local GP also spoke to women at the meeting as did Susie Kola, an NUI Galway PHD student.

The meeting was supported by GlaxoSmithKline, who have been running an ongoing campaign to raise awareness about the disease and how it can be prevented by getting vaccinated as well as attending for regular smear tests at their local GP or health clinic.

In Europe, a woman dies from cervical cancer every 18 minutes<sup>3</sup>, while approximately 70 - 75 women in Ireland die from the disease every year<sup>4</sup>. Any woman, young or old, who is sexually active, is at risk of cervical cancer<sup>5</sup>. The

disease is caused by certain high risk types of the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) which up to 80% of women will come into contact with at some point in their life<sup>6,7,8</sup>. HPV is a common virus which is transmitted through sexual intercourse, or intimate skin-to-skin genital contact<sup>9</sup>.

For more information log onto [www.preventcervicalcancer.ie](http://www.preventcervicalcancer.ie)

**- Ends -**

**For further information please contact:**

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **About GSK**

GlaxoSmithKline- one of the world's leading research-based pharmaceutical and healthcare companies-is committed to improving the quality of human life by enabling people to do more, feel better and live longer.

### **References**

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