Cancer test better than Pap smears

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Medical Editor

A Perth women's cancer expert believes rates of cervical cancer will drop 15 per cent once a new screening test is introduced this year.

Gynaecologic oncologist Jason Tan, a lead clinician with WA's Cancer and Palliative Care Network, said the new test, which will replace Pap smears, would lead to fewer deaths.

From December, women aged 25 to 69 will be screened for human papillomavirus, or HPV, which causes most cervical cancer. They will only need to be tested every five years instead of two years with Pap smears.

Unlike Pap smears which check cells for abnormalities, the newer test detects HPV infection before any cell changes.

It can be used by all women, regardless of whether they have received the HPV vaccine.