



Introduction: a glance at the past, a glimpse of the future

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Summary

- It was almost a hundred years after Mueller's 1845 publication on the microscopic appearance of malignant cells, before cytology became accepted as a valuable diagnostic tool.
- George Papanicolaou's work contributed much to the field of cervical cytology and helped form the basis of successful cervical screening programmes around the world, considerably reducing the incidence of cervical carcinoma in screened populations.
- Advances in diagnostic procedures such as endoscopy and imaging, combined with developments in cytology sampling devices and methods such as FNA, enable a timely and cost effective diagnosis to be reached with minimal risk to the patient.
- The adoption of LBC methodology in all areas of cytology has enhanced cytological diagnosis, and reduced the need for repeated sampling in many cases.
- Special staining, immunocytochemistry, and molecular techniques have added refinement to the cytological diagnosis, and contribute significantly to the management of the patient.