



CWHS

Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Breast cancer is most effectively treated when detected at an early stage, reducing both morbidity and mortality for women.¹ Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women in the United States and in California.² Studies of the etiology of breast cancer have failed to identify feasible primary prevention strategies suitable for use in the general population;³ therefore, secondary prevention such as mammography screening is an effective way of reducing mortality. A significant barrier to screening found among women who do not get mammograms is a lack of access to health care or not having health insurance.⁴

The American Cancer Society recommends that women start screening for breast cancer at age 40.⁵ The risk for breast cancer increases with advancing age.² Efficacy for reducing the death rate from breast cancer within five years after diagnosis is greater among postmenopausal than premenopausal women.⁶

The Cancer Detection Section (CDS) *Cancer Detection Programs: Every Woman Counts* was formed by the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP) in 1992. The NBCCEDP targets lower income women⁷ who are often uninsured or underinsured.

Data from the California Women's Health Survey (CWHS) for 2006 and 2007 were analyzed in order to examine obstacles to mammography screening for women ages 50 to 64 who lived at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL;

which is an annual gross household income of \$42,408 for a family of four). The CWHS asked women whether they had ever had a mammogram and how long had it been since their last mammogram. If respondents reported not having a mammogram in the past year then they were asked what their main reason was for not having a mammogram within the past year. The women were grouped as Hispanic, White, African-American/Black, and Asian/Other. Women who refused to answer the questions or who did not know if they had ever had a mammogram were excluded from the analyses. Women who had breast problems or cancer were also excluded. While CDS does screen younger women, this report focused on women ages 50 to 64, a group that may benefit most from screening. Responses were weighted in these analyses by age and race/ethnicity to reflect the 2000 California adult female population.

- Of respondents ages 50 to 64, living at or below 200 percent of the FPL, 62.0 percent of White women had an annual screening mammogram compared with 18.2 percent of Hispanic, 6.8 percent of African American/Black, and 13.0 percent of Asian/Other women (Chi-square test, $p < .01$).
- Analyses found a relationship between health insurance and income status to whether women obtained mammograms. Among women with lower incomes, the main reason for not having a mammogram was either lack of health insurance or inability to

Obstacles to Mammography Screening for California Women Ages 50 to 64, 2006-2007

California Department of Public Health
Cancer Detection Section

Public Health Message:

Lower income and ethnic minority women are significantly less likely to go for regular mammography screening. Education and outreach are important to increase breast cancer screening for all women in California. Uninsured, underinsured, and lower income women who can not afford a mammogram will benefit from free breast cancer screening services to encourage early detection and help reduce their cancer burden.

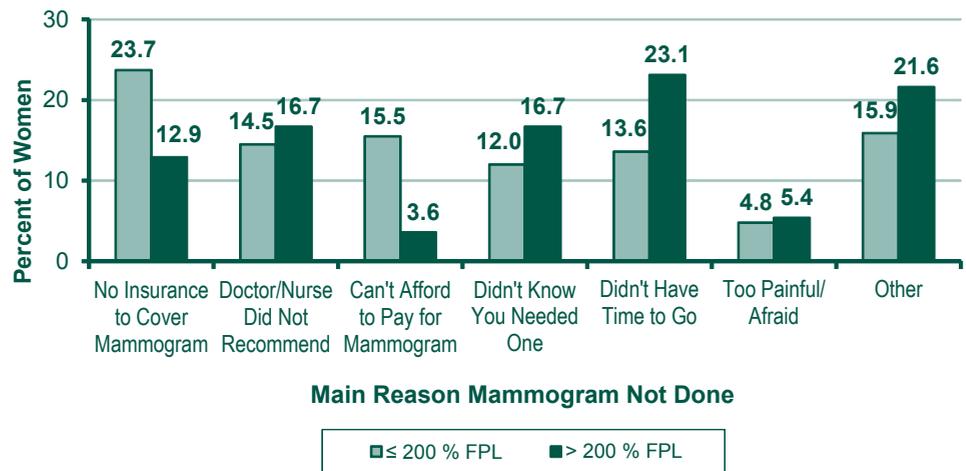
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Obstacles to Mammography Screening for California Women Ages 50 to 64, 2006-2007

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pay for a mammogram (see Figure 1). Taken together, 39.2 percent of women of lower incomes (at or below 200 percent of the FPL) indicated that these two economic factors prevented them from receiving a mammogram (Chi-square test, $p < .01$). In contrast, 23.1 percent of women with higher income (above 200 percent of the FPL) stated their main reason as not having time to go for a mammogram; only 3.6 percent indicated they could not afford one (Chi-square test, $p < .01$).

Figure 1 **Obstacles for Not Having a Mammogram Within the Past Year for California Women Ages 50-64, by Federal Poverty Level (FPL), 2006-2007**



Source: California Women's Health Survey, 2006-2007

*Obstacles to
Mammography
Screening for California
Women Ages 50 to 64,
2006-2007*

California Department of Public
Health
Cancer Detection Section

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- 4 Meissner HI, Breen N, Taubman ML, Vernon SW, Graubard BI. Which women aren't getting mammograms and why? *Cancer Causes and Control.* 2007;18:61-70.
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