



CWHS

Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Cancer of the cervix grows slowly, providing ample opportunity for early detection and treatment.¹ Regular screening using the Papanicolaou (Pap) test has successfully decreased the incidence of cervical cancer.² Early detection can save lives because pre-malignant lesions are more effectively treated than invasive cancers.¹ Therefore, death due to cervical cancer can be considered a missed opportunity for prevention.²

The American Cancer Society recommends that women have annual Pap tests beginning three years after the start of sexual activities and begin annual testing no later than 21 years of age.³ With increasing age or after three consecutive normal Pap tests, it is recommended that women be screened less frequently, approximately every two to three years.³ The Cancer Detection Programs: Every Woman Counts, run by the Cancer Detection Section, is funded by the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. This program provides free cervical cancer screening services to underinsured, uninsured, and low-income women^{2,4} who are mainly ethnic minorities. Even though screening Pap test rates have increased in recent years, many lower-income and ethnic minority women still do not go for regular screenings.^{1,4}

Data from the California Women's Health Survey for 2006 and 2007 were combined and analyzed. Women were asked if they had ever had a Pap test and if so, how long it had been since their last Pap test. Data was analyzed for women ages 25

to 64 who had either last been screened more than five years ago or had never been screened for cervical cancer by race/ethnicity and income status. These women were referred to as "rarely or never screened." Those women 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, were considered lower-income, and women who lived above 200 percent of the FPL were considered higher income. Those women who refused to respond, or who answered they did not know to the question when asked if they have had a hysterectomy were excluded from the analysis. The numbers for African American/Black and American Indian/Native Alaskan women surveyed were too small to report any findings for these groups. Responses were weighted in these analyses by age and race/ethnicity to reflect the 2000 California adult female population.

- Combined data from 2006 and 2007 showed that 90.6 percent of California women were screened for cervical cancer in the past three years, 3.3 percent of them in the past four to five years, and 6.1 percent of them had rarely or never been screened before.
- More Asian/Pacific Islander women were rarely or never screened for cervical cancer (11.0 percent) than Hispanic (5.7 percent) and White (5.6 percent) women (Chi-square test, $p < .01$).

Women Ages 25 to 64 Who Were Rarely or Never Screened for Cervical Cancer in California, 2006-2007

California Department of Public Health
Cancer Detection Section

Public Health Message:

Women seem to be more aware of the need to go for regular cervical cancer screening. For instance, in 2006 and 2007, 6.0 percent of Californian women were rarely or never screened for cervical cancer compared to 7.0 percent in 2005, which reflects an improvement. Lower-income and ethnic minority women continue to have significantly lower screening rates than higher-income women. Outreach efforts to promote regular screening and free screening services for the uninsured, underinsured, and lower-income women appear to have increased the number of women going for cervical cancer screening in California.

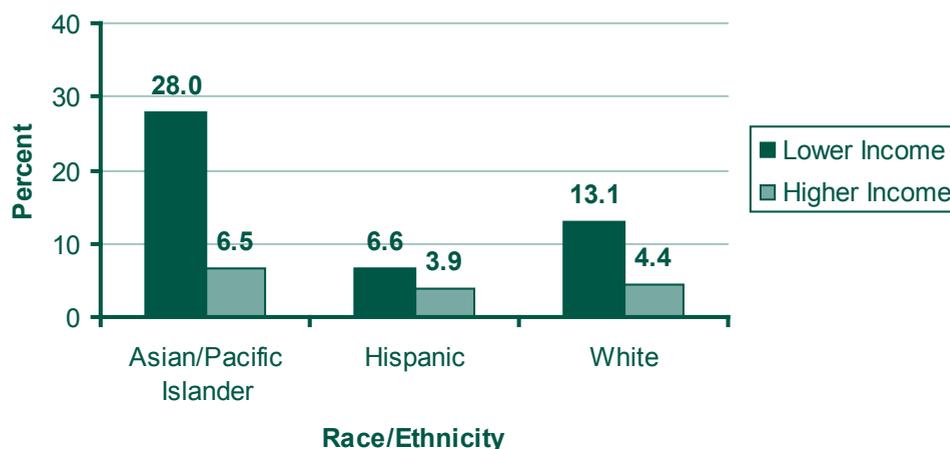
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- The percentages of women who had rarely or never been screened in the reported race/ethnicity groups (White, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islanders) were significantly higher for the lower-income groups than for the higher-income groups (see Figure 1; Chi-square test, $p < .01$).

Figure 1

Percentages of Women Rarely or Never Screened for Cervical Cancer, by Race/Ethnicity and Income Status, California, 2006-2007



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

- Leyden WA, Manos MM, Geiger AM, Weinmann S, Mouchawar J, Bischoff K, Yood MU, Gilbert J, Taplin SH. Cervical cancer in women with comprehensive health care access: attributable factors in the screening process. *J Natl Cancer Inst.* May 2005;97(9):675-683.
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- Adams EK, Breen N, Joski P. *Impact of the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program on Mammography and Pap Test Utilization among White, Hispanic, and African American Women: 1996-2000*. American Cancer Society. November 2006.

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