



Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Cervical cancer used to be the leading cause of cancer deaths in women in the United States.¹ Regular Pap smear screening can detect cervical cancer in its early stages,¹ and if found early cervical cancer is highly treatable. Six out of ten cervical cancers occur in women who have never had a Pap test or who have not been screened in the past five years.¹ During the past four decades, the number of cervical cancer cases and deaths has significantly declined because of increases in Pap testing.¹ In the United States, cervical cancer cases and deaths have both decreased by 3.7 percent per year during 1996 to 2004.¹

In 2007, the California Women's Health Survey asked women ages 18 and older if they had ever had a Pap test, and if they had, how long it had been since their last test. The women were also asked

about their race/ethnicity, age, and family income. Responses were weighted in these analyses by age and race/ethnicity to reflect the 2000 California adult female population.

In 2007, 81 percent of all women surveyed ages 18 and older reported they had had a Pap test within the past three years, 15 percent within three to five years, and 4 percent never had a Pap test.

- Women ages 60 and older were least likely to report having had a Pap test within the past three years (73.9 percent) than ages 18-29 (74.6 percent), ages 50-59 (86.5 percent), ages 30-39 (90.1 percent) and ages 40-49 (92.9 percent; see Figure 1).
- Women ages 18-29 were more likely to report never having a Pap test (23.1

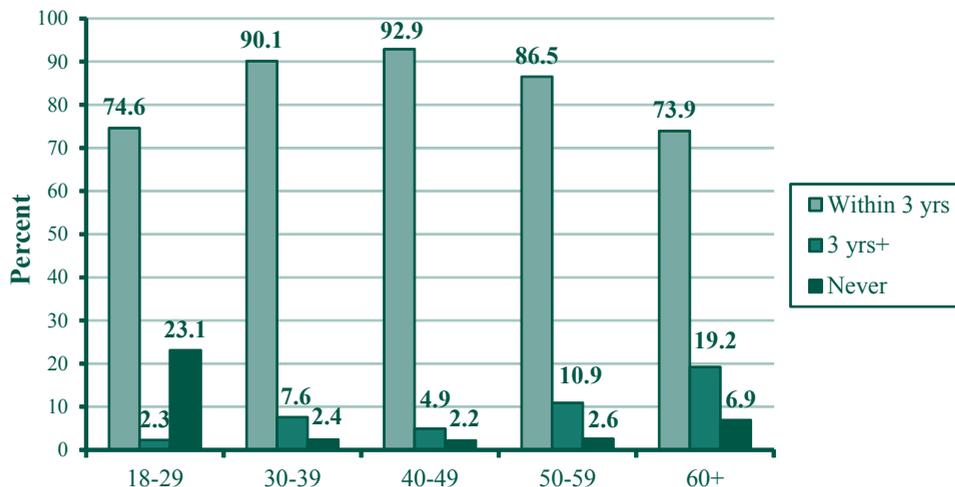
Pap Screening History Among California Women Ages 18 and Older, 2007

Department of Health Care Services
California Department of Public Health
Office of Women's Health

Public Health Message:

Although most Californian women reported recent screening for cervical cancer, low-income and Asian/Other women reported relatively infrequent Pap testing. For younger women (under the age of 26) there are vaccines to prevent cervical cancer. Efforts to increase access to screening for low-income and Asian/Other women as well as women under age 30 and over age 59 could reduce cervical cancer morbidity.

Figure 1
PAP Testing Status of Women by Age Group, California, 2007



Source: California Women's Health Survey, 2007

Issue 6, Fall 2010, Num. 16

Pap Screening History Among California Women Ages 18 and Older, 2007

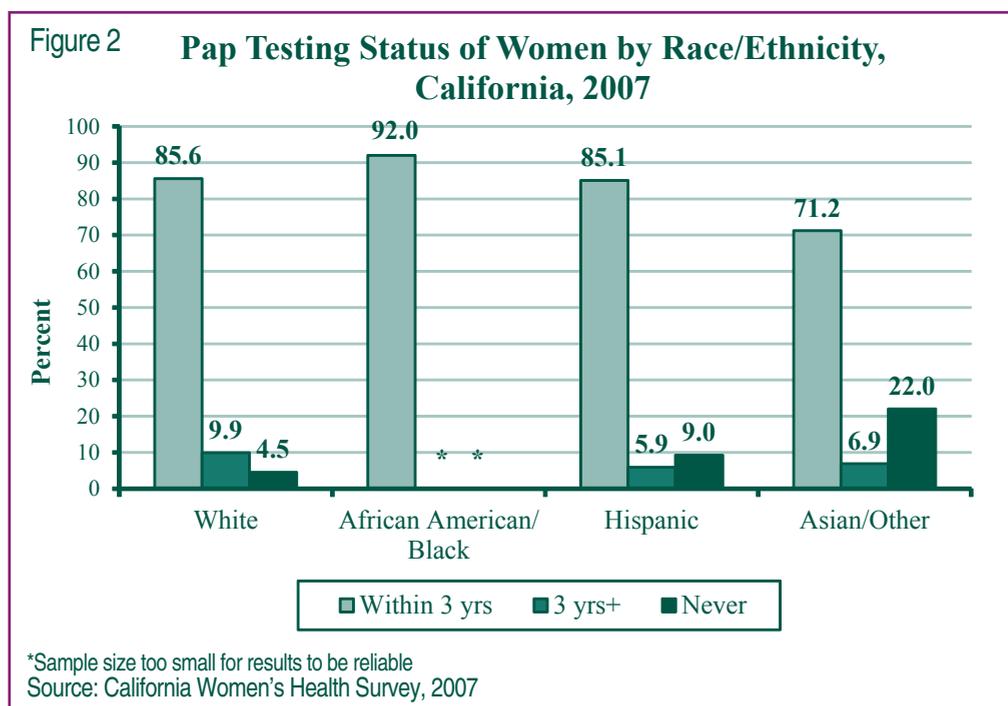
Department of Health Care Services
 California Department of Public Health
 Office of Women's Health

percent) than ages 60 and older (6.9 percent), ages 50-59 (2.6 percent), ages 30-39 (2.4 percent), and ages 40-49 (2.2 percent).

were more likely to report having a Pap test within the past three years (90.7 percent) than women at or below 200 percent of the FPL (74.6 percent).

- White (85.6 percent), African American/Black (92.0 percent), and Hispanic (85.1 percent) women were more likely than Asian/Other (71.2 percent) women to have a Pap test within the past three years.
- Asian/Other women (22.0 percent) were more likely than the other race/ethnic groups to report never having a Pap test compared to White (4.5 percent), African American/Black (4.1 percent), and Hispanic (9.0 percent) women (see Figure 2).
- Women with incomes at 200 percent above the federal poverty level (FPL)

As expected, women above 200 percent of the FPL were more likely to have Pap tests than women below that level, which suggests that women above 200 percent of the FPL are more likely to be insured. However, nearly 74 percent of the women who could not otherwise afford a Pap test appear to be receiving these services with the assistance of government programs. Health disparities still appear to exist, particularly among Asian/Other women.



1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Learn about prevention and screening. <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/CervicalCancer/>. Published January 2008. Accessed December 2008.

Submitted by: Patricia Lee, Ph.D. and Terri Thorfinnson, J.D., Department of Health Care Services, California Department of Public Health, Office of Women's Health, (916) 440-7633, Patricia.Lee@dhcs.ca.gov