

Regional Variations in Cancer Screening Rates Found in Women with Diabetes

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1 Abstract

2 A review of the literature gives conflicting findings regarding gender specific cancer
3 screening rates found in women with chronic illness. Secondary analysis was utilized to
4 determine if women with diabetes have different patterns of cancer screening than women of the
5 general population; and, if so, identify the determinants of these screening patterns. The 12
6 states utilizing the optional women's health module for the 2003 Behavioral Risk Factor
7 Surveillance System (BRFSS) was downloaded into STATA Software. Contingency tables were
8 used to identify the prevalence of cancer screening in women who self-report that they have
9 diabetes in comparison to women who report being non-diabetic. Logistic regression examined
10 the association between the PRECEDE Model determinants and screening behaviors. No
11 significant association was found between having a diagnosis of diabetes and mammography
12 screening rates ($F = 1.5$, $p\text{-value} = .22$). However, cervical cancer screening rates were
13 statistically significantly different among the two groups of women ($F = 39.01$, $p\text{-value} = .00$).
14 This investigation identified a gap in cervical cancer screening rates among women with diabetes
15 as compared to women without diabetes (78% versus 86% respectively). Regional exceptions
16 were noted between the 12 states. Ten of the 11 PRECEDE variables demonstrated a significant
17 association with Pap screening rates. The states demonstrating inadequate screening rates were
18 the states with the most negative PRECEDE factors. Research has shown that the primary
19 reason women seek cancer screening is when they are encouraged by a health care provider. If
20 other care providers are focused on disease management, nurses who pride themselves with
21 providing holistic care can capitalize on the advocacy role inherent in nursing and support
22 utilization of screening in underserved areas of the country.

23

1 Introduction

2 The purpose of this study was to determine if women with diabetes have different
3 patterns of screening for breast and cervical cancer than women of the general population and to
4 identify the determinants that relate to this pattern. It was hypothesized that women with
5 diabetes would be less likely to be screened for breast and cervical cancers and that the issues
6 related to at-risk populations would compound this finding. For the purposes of this
7 investigation, cancer screening was defined as receipt of mammography and Pap smears.

8 A review of the literature gives conflicting results regarding whether the cancer screening
9 needs of women with diabetes are being met. Fontana, Baumann, Helberg, and Richard (1997)
10 conducted one of the earliest identified studies investigating chronic disease status and its
11 association with preventive services. Fontana et al.'s study found that the presence of a chronic
12 illness resulted in fewer screenings for cancer. Specifically, as it relates to women, women with
13 diabetes were less likely to have a mammogram and women with diabetes or heart disease were
14 less likely to have a Pap test. This corresponds to the findings of Kiefe, Funkhouser, and Fouad
15 (1998) that chronic illness is associated with decreased cancer screening. Likewise, Beckman,
16 Cuddihy, Scheitel, Naessens, Killian, and Pankratz (2001) also found that women with diabetes
17 are less likely to receive mammograms.

18 On the other hand, Heflin, Oddone, Peper, Burchett, and Cohen (2002) found no
19 association between chronic illness and receipt of cancer screening in older adults. In fact,
20 Heflin et al report "hypertension and the presence of a higher number of comorbid conditions are
21 associated with a higher rate of receipt of cancer screening" (p. 1652). These authors explain
22 this finding as the result of increased health care visits individuals with chronic illness require,
23 which provides more opportunities to be offered preventive care.

1 approval for this project was obtained from the Rush University Institutional Review Board
2 (IRB).

3 Sample

4 Subsets of the 2003 BRFSS were utilized. Participants for inclusion were women who
5 responded positively to the core question that they have been told by a doctor that they have
6 diabetes and compared with women who do not have diabetes. Those responding positively to
7 having diabetes but only during pregnancy were excluded. In addition, for receipt of
8 mammography, those selected must be 40 years of age and older. This is in keeping with the
9 American Cancer Society (2004) guidelines those women 40 years of age and older should have
10 yearly mammograms as long as they are healthy. The sample analyzing cervical cancer
11 screening rates included women 21 to 70 years of age. The American Cancer Society
12 recommends women to have a Pap smear starting within three years of intercourse or age 21;
13 whichever comes first. The results of these two samples were correlated with responses to the
14 optional Women's Health Module in regards to screening for breast and cervical cancer. In
15 2003, thirteen states used this optional module (CDC, 2003). Consequently, this study evaluated
16 data from the following states: Arkansas, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, New
17 Jersey, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, and Wyoming (CDC). Guam was not
18 included in this study.

19 Data Analysis

20 Appropriate 2003 BFRSS Data Files were downloaded into STATA statistical software
21 for analysis. The sampling weights that correspond to each data record were applied prior to
22 analysis. Sampling weights are used for complex sampling designs to adjust for non-sampling
23 bias. Examples of non-sampling bias are those that can occur due to non-responders having

1 differing views than responders or due to an inability to sample sub-populations that are
2 considered to be in the target population (individuals not having phone coverage or not having
3 the ability to accept a phone call).

4 The primary hypothesis, that women with diabetes have lower rates of breast and cervical
5 cancer screening than women who do not have diabetes, was tested using a 2 X 2 contingency
6 table displaying the categorical variables. The categorical variables being women with or without
7 diabetes (explanatory variable) and women who have or have not had cancer screening (response
8 variable). A separate table was developed for each type of cancer screening (breast and
9 cervical). The question “Is cancer screening associated with the diagnosis of diabetes?” was
10 answered by determining if the two variables are independent or dependent. The variables are
11 statistically dependent if the conditional distributions are not identical. However, because
12 sampling variability may result in percentages that differ in the population, the chi-squared
13 statistic was used to test for independence between the variables. A p-value $\leq .05$ or less
14 signified that cancer screening was associated with having diabetes. Residual analysis further
15 provided information regarding the nature of the association. The strength of the statistical
16 dependence between the variables was determined using the odds ratio.

17 Prior to utilizing logistic regression to determine the relationship between the PRECEDE
18 factors to cancer screening in women with diabetes, a correlation matrix was analyzed to
19 determine if any of the explanatory variables in the regression model demonstrated
20 multicollinearity. Independent variables were correlated to determine if there was any
21 redundancy of one variable with another. Since no multicollinearity was demonstrated, no
22 variables were deleted from the initial regression equation except for the number of days in the
23 past 30 viewed as poor health due to physical or mental issues. This variable was omitted due to

1 value of .22. Overall, thirty-two percent of the non-diabetic women had not had a mammogram
2 in the previous two years as compared to 34% of the women who did have diabetes.

3 When calculated on state level, significant differences were found for Mississippi and
4 South Dakota. Diabetic women in Mississippi (p-value=. 04) were less likely to receive
5 mammography while diabetic women in South Dakota (p-value = .01) were more likely to be
6 screened. Table 1 reports state mammography-screening rates.

7 Pap Screening Rates for Diabetic Versus Non-diabetic Women

8 Analysis revealed that there was a significant association between having a diagnosis of
9 diabetes and cervical screening rates with an F score of 39.01, CI (1.84, 49995.98), and a *p*-value
10 of .00. Overall, 13.5 percent of the women who did not have diabetes had not had Pap screening
11 in the previous two years as compared to 22% of the women who did have diabetes. All states
12 show a significant association except Hawaii and Missouri. Table 2 presents rounded Pap
13 screening rates for individual states.

14 As noted, Hawaii and Missouri were the only states that did not show a statistically
15 significant association. Screening rates were the same for both diabetic and non-diabetic women
16 in Hawaii and Pap screening was lower in diabetic women in Missouri but not at a statistically
17 significant level. Hawaii demonstrated the highest screening rates for both diabetic and non-
18 diabetic women at 91% respectively. Lowest Pap screening rate for non-diabetic women was
19 found in Arkansas at 78% and the lowest for diabetic women was 66% in Wyoming.

20 Factors Associated with Cervical Cancer Screening Rates in Diabetic Women

21 The second aim of this study was to explore the association between selected
22 predisposing and enabling factors and cancer screening rates of women with diabetes if the first
23 hypothesis was found to be true. Between the two types of screenings, Pap screening was

1 reduced in the diabetic population. Therefore, further analysis was limited to determinants of
2 cervical cancer screening.

3 A total of eleven factors were entered into a logistic regression model with cervical
4 cancer screening rates of diabetic women. Ratings of general health in categories of excellent,
5 very good, good, fair, or poor were significant ($p=.00$) as women with better ratings of general
6 health demonstrating improved Pap screening rates. The number of days during the past 30 days
7 when physical health was viewed as not good was not significant but the number of days that
8 mental health was not good was significant ($p=.00$) and demonstrated an inverse relationship
9 with screening. Specifically, screening rates increased as the number of days identified as being
10 poor in mental health decreased. However, it should be noted that even though the p -values for
11 mental health was statistically significant, the odds ratio was .99 indicating little difference in
12 Pap screening rates based on women's response to poor mental health. The number of days
13 defined as poor health in the past 30 days in which physical or mental health kept the participant
14 from doing usual activities was subsequently not entered into the regression model due to
15 overlap with previous factors.

16 Enabling factors such as whether the participant had health care coverage was significant
17 at a p -value of .00 as well as being able to identify at least one personal health care provider
18 ($p=.00$). Women that report they have health care coverage or at least one personal physician
19 were more likely to receive Pap screening. Education categorically ranged from never attended
20 school to four years of college or more and was significant ($p=.00$). As expected, screening rates
21 increased as levels of education increased. Employment status and income was significantly
22 associated (p -value of .00 respectively). Those reporting being employed or self-employed were
23 more likely to be screened than those who were not employed as did those with higher income

1 levels. Health problems requiring the use of special equipment or resulting in limitation of
2 activity levels were significant (p-value of .00) and was associated with reduced Pap screening
3 rates. Race was found to be significant ($p=.00$). Interestingly, non-Hispanic whites were less
4 likely to receive cervical cancer screening than Hispanics or other races. Table 3 summarizes the
5 results of regression modeling on Pap screening rates using these determinants.

6 Discussion

7 This investigation identified a gap in cervical cancer screening rates among women with
8 diabetes as compared to women without diabetes (78% versus 86% respectively). However,
9 Outliers for mammography screening were identified. For example, diabetic women in
10 Mississippi were less likely to receive breast cancer screening in contrast to other states. Other
11 studies confirm this is not an isolated finding. Hall, Jamison, Coughlin, and Uhler (2004) noted
12 lower screening rates for both black and white women in the Mississippi Delta than among
13 similar women in other parts of the country. Coughlin, Thompson, Seeff, Richards, and
14 Stallings (2002) found that screening rates varied by region with a deficit especially noted in the
15 nonmetropolitan South. Like Coughlin et al., the findings of this study indicated screening rates
16 varied more by region than ethnicity.

17 The reason for the deficit in mammography screening in Mississippi can be speculated
18 based on the theoretical framework of this study. A literature review for this investigation
19 identified enabling factors associated with screening deficits. These factors include lack of
20 insurance coverage (Danigelis, Roberson, Worden, Flynn, Dorwaldt, Ashley, & et al, 1995;
21 Friedman, Ahmed, Franks, Weatherup, Manning, Vance, & Thompson, 2002; Katz, & Hofer,
22 1994; & Michielutte, Dignan, Blinson, & Wells, 1999), low education level (Cornelius, Smith, &
23 Simpson, 2002; Danigelis et al, 1995; Katz et al, 1994; & Michielutte et al, 1999), low income

1 level (Danigelis et al., 1999, Katz et al, 1994; Michielutte et al, 1999), and increased
2 unemployment (Danigelis, 1995; Katz, 1994; Zapka, 1989). Interestingly, Mississippi
3 demonstrated the highest unemployment, the highest number of women who report being unable
4 to work, the highest percentage reporting an annual income that was less than \$25,000, and tied
5 with New Jersey for the highest number of women who report having less than a high school
6 education when compared to 11 other states used in this study based on the BRFSS (CDC, 2003).
7 Mississippi clearly is at risk for inadequate screening for all women, diabetic and nondiabetic, in
8 light of multiple enabling factors that inhibit access to adequate preventive care.

9 The question that needs to be asked is why is South Dakota more likely to perform
10 screening for breast cancer in diabetic women than those who do not have diabetes. Again, when
11 comparing enabling determinants in the BRFSS (CDC, 2003), South Dakota reports the fewest
12 percentage of women reporting an inability to work (1.8%) and over 90% of all women have
13 health care coverage. Only Vermont, Wyoming, Iowa, and Hawaii report fewer percentages of
14 women with less than a high school education. Additionally, South Dakota has the lowest
15 unemployment rate. The percentage reporting an annual income less than \$25,000 is slightly less
16 than the average of 29% in all 12 states with 28% in South Dakota. With fewer factors reflecting
17 risk and vulnerability for inadequate health care in general, diabetic women are more likely to
18 have increased visits to a health care provider for care than nondiabetic women. Consequently,
19 this increased exposure to health care may provide more opportunity to receive health promotion
20 and early detection screenings as suggested by Heflin, Oddone, Peper, Burchett, and Cohen
21 (2002). However, it must be noted that South Dakota's Pap screening rate for non-diabetics at
22 88% and diabetics at 89% is a long way from the Healthy People 2010 objective of 97%. It

1 should also be noted that the BRFSS data did not distinguish the impact the Native American
2 population found in South Dakota has on these results.

3 *Cervical Cancer Screening*

4 It is not surprising that Hawaii's diabetic women do not reflect the norm in regards to
5 cervical cancer screening. Hawaii has the lowest percentage of women with less than a high
6 school education than the other 11 states (CDC, 2003). The unemployment rate is a low 2.8
7 percent and Hawaii has the lowest number of women reporting an inability to work (1.9%). It is
8 second only to Tennessee at having the greatest percentage of women having health care
9 coverage at greater than 90%.

10 Missouri does not stand outside the norm in regards to enabling determinants. In fact, all
11 factors are rather average in rankings, including screening rates. So, why does Missouri have
12 higher pap screening rates than the other remaining 10 states do in regards Pap screening in
13 diabetic women? Like so many issues related to health promotion and illness prevention, the
14 reason is likely multifactorial. However, one reason may relate to the priority this state gives to
15 cancer screening. A visit to the Missouri Department of Health and Human Services (Missouri
16 Department of Health and Human Services, 2005) demonstrates an active legislative, state, and
17 financial focus on cancer screening.

18 In 1990, the United States Congress passed the Breast and Cervical Cancer Mortality
19 Prevention Act that lead to the formation of the CDC directed National Breast and Cervical
20 Cancer Early Detection Program (CDC, 2005). While this is a national program, the CDC
21 (2005) reports state programs vary in funding, management, service delivery, population
22 demographics, and other factors to the extent that comparison across states is discouraged.
23 States are allowed some independence in determining the women who are most in need of

1 who had completed a mammogram and/or Pap smear describing feelings of empowerment and
2 accomplishment (Marshall, 2004). Likewise, women who perceive they have poor general
3 health including physical and mental health are more likely to have difficulty managing their
4 chronic illness resulting in little priority given to preventive care. This study found that diabetic
5 women with positive ratings of general health were more likely to be screened. Additionally,
6 those with increasing number of days with poor mental health were less likely to be screening
7 although this finding demonstrated a minor impact based on an odds ratio of .99. The same
8 measure of physical health was not statistically significant.

9 In this study, predisposing factors related to quality of life and perceptions of health
10 demonstrated an impact on cancer screening behaviors. Since predisposing factors according to
11 the PRECEDE Model relates to attitude, emotions, and values, it is not surprising ratings of
12 general health and mental health have an impact but physical health does not. The two previous
13 factors relate to perceptions while physical health is more of a barrier to overcome. In fact,
14 women with poor physical health may still feel they have the power to overcome limitations and
15 give priority to preventing further illness through preventive care. Matters related to mental
16 health and attitude may be much harder to overcome than the physical.

17 Studies identifying enabling determinants to cancer screening in women in the general
18 non-diabetic population are numerous. The findings in this study were not dissimilar.
19 Demographic factors such as low income, low education level, and increased unemployment
20 served as factors that were statistically associated with decreased cancer screening rates in this
21 study and others.

22 The risk factors associated with diabetes; such as obesity and a sedentary lifestyle, are
23 also more likely to be found in women of poverty and lower socioeconomic levels (Beckles &

1 Thompson-Reid, 2001). Consequently, diabetic women are more likely to be disproportionately
2 represented in lower socioeconomic groups that are less likely to seek or receive cancer
3 screening. It is not surprising that states with greater poverty and lower socioeconomic status in
4 their populations demonstrated poorer screening rates for both mammography and Pap smear
5 screenings.

6 For reasons discussed, diabetic women are more likely to be uninsured and to not have a
7 regular health care provider. All these factors are associated with decreased utilization of cancer
8 screening. In this study the finding remained true. Women who could not report having at least
9 one personal physician or health care coverage (insurance) were also less likely to be screened.

10 Studies have demonstrated that women with disabilities were less likely to be screened
11 for cancer (Becker, Stuifbergen, & Tinkle, 1997; Nosek, Howland, Rintala, Young, &
12 Champong, 2001). Women with diabetes who report having a disability that limits their ability
13 to perform activities and/or women who have a disability that requires the use of special
14 equipment demonstrated decreased rates of screening than diabetic women without disabilities.
15 The nature of uncontrolled diabetes promotes neurovascular changes that result in increasing
16 neuropathies, blindness, and amputations. It is expected that greater disabilities would be found
17 in this population. These disabilities may present barriers of access to preventive care that is
18 both physical and emotional. Greater effort is needed to see that screening is not neglected in
19 this population.

20 Finally, the finding that whites were less likely to be screened than Hispanics or
21 nonwhites was surprising given the preponderance of poverty in minority populations. However,
22 according to the American Cancer Society (2003), 84% of black (non-Hispanic) women who
23 were 18 years of age or older have received a Pap test in the United States in the year 2000 as

1 compared to white (non-Hispanic) women at 82%. These statistics are based on CDC National
2 Interview Survey results in 2000. This may partly relate to the success of national, state, and
3 local programs, such as the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program
4 (NBCCEDP) that target low income and minority women to promote cancer screening. These
5 finding also increasingly seem to point to more regional and socioeconomic disparities than
6 factors that relate to race independently (Coughlin, Thompson, Seeff, Richards, & Stallings,
7 2002).

8 Implications for Further Research

9 Clearly, a greater gap in cervical cancer screening exists in diabetic women. Speculation
10 points to the health care delivery system as a possible reason for this neglect in preventive care.
11 Models of health care delivery can choose to promote preventive care by increasing access or
12 impose barriers to preventive care. Further investigation is needed to explore access to
13 preventive care, provider perceptions of the need for such care, and interventions to promote
14 cancer screening, especially among diabetic women of poor socioeconomic status found in
15 certain regions of the country.

16 The National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program has been implemented
17 in every state in the United States (CDC, 2001). Programs such as this have achieved success as
18 indicated by a decrease in racial and ethnic disparity found in screening rates. However, regional
19 differences remain. Issues of vulnerability seem to be a factor but further investigation is needed
20 to explore why these regional differences continue when national programs for each state exists.
21 Social policy and political research is needed to explore this finding.

22 Limitations

1 Data from the BRFSS is based on self-report. It is known that self-reported cancer
2 screening rates tend to be overestimated (CDC, 2001). If anything, the results from this study
3 probably underestimate the scope of the problem. Rates are likely to be a bigger concern than
4 noted here. Whether cancer screening rates of diabetics and non-diabetics differ in this
5 underestimation is unknown. Further research is needed to determine the scope of this concern.

6 The CDC (2001) reports that over 30 methodological studies suggest most measures in
7 the BRFSS are both reliable and valid. However, the measures in this study are used as a proxy
8 for PRECEDE determinants which may not have been the intent of the original variables. Since
9 the variables for enabling determinants consisted mainly of concrete demographic information,
10 these measures are likely to be most reliable and valid. However, predisposing variables as
11 reflected in perceptions of health and quality of life are more suspect. It is suspected that these
12 variables offer a somewhat crude estimate of intended measures. Conclusions from this
13 evaluation should consider this limitation. In addition, the measure of race as reflected as
14 white/non-Hispanic and nonwhite/Hispanic is also a crude distribution of racial and ethnic
15 subpopulations. It was also found the BRFSS underrepresented certain population groups such
16 as Hispanics and Native Americans. Further research with clear categorization of racial and
17 ethnic groups is needed.

18 Finally, methods of coding of missing observations can present vastly different results.
19 After numerous explorations of coding methods for observations used in logistic regression, a
20 final method was selected. Ordinal data was coded at the average measure of the variable and
21 missing observations of categorical variables was coded as 0. Other researchers may have
22 different approaches that impact final results.

23

Conclusion

1
2 One of the most important findings is this study relates to health disparities in preventive
3 care found in certain regions. National programs to promote cancer screening in underserved
4 women are finding success as demonstrated by improved screening rates in minorities. Regional
5 exceptions continue to exist. Not surprising, the states demonstrating inadequate screening rates
6 are the states with the more negative predisposing and enabling factors. It appears greater
7 communication, resources, and focuses are needed between all local, state, and national levels to
8 address health care delivery and access to the underserved. It is true that local and state
9 departments of health should know the needs of their population best. However, greater
10 monitoring at the national level when gaps in health care are observed may be needed to provide
11 resources and expertise to the regions most at risk.

12 The relationship of the PRECEDE determinants to cervical cancer screening was not
13 surprising. These factors are the same factors documented many times in numerous other studies
14 involving women who are non-diabetic. It just further substantiates that socioeconomic factors
15 and perceptions of quality of life factors impact screening rates.

16 The findings of this study are not isolated to cancer screening. It likely points to many
17 issues of health care disparities across the country. As Green and Kreuter (1999) indicated with
18 their PRECEDE Model, these issues are complex and multifactorial. However, regions at risk
19 can be identified. Health care providers underestimate the impact they have by informing and
20 encouraging those they serve to perform preventive care. If other care providers are focused on
21 disease management, nurses who pride themselves with providing holistic care can capitalize on
22 the advocacy role inherent in nursing and support utilization of screening in underserved women.

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Table 1

Mammography Screening Rates by State Reported in Contingency Tables

State	Had Mammogram (Non-diabetics) (%)	Had Mammogram (Diabetics)(%)
Arkansas	62	54
Georgia	67	69
Hawaii	72	75
Iowa	70	64
Mississippi	62	53
Missouri	64	70
New Jersey	70	70
Oklahoma	67	63
South Dakota	70	79
Tennessee	75	67
Vermont	67	69
Wyoming	58	53

Table 2

Pap Screening Rates by State Reported in Contingency Tables in Row Proportion

State	Had Pap (Non-DM)	Had Pap (DM)
Arkansas	78	69
Georgia	89	81
Hawaii	91	91
Iowa	86	76
Mississippi	83	71
Missouri	84	77
New Jersey	87	80
Oklahoma	81	70
South Dakota	88	89
Tennessee	91	82
Vermont	88	73
Wyoming	79	66

Screening in Women with Diabetes

Table 3

Regression Results of Pap Screening Rates of Diabetics and their PRECEDE Determinants

Last Pap	Odds Ratio	Std. Error	t	p	95% CI
General Health	.81	.02	-7.97	.00	.77 - .85
Physical Health	.99	.00	-1.19	.23	1.00 - 1.00
Mental Health	.99	.00	-2.18	.03	1.00 - 1.00
Health Plan	1.47	.10	5.82	.00	1.30 – 1.67
Personal Doctor	1.78	.13	8.25	.00	1.56 - 2.06
Education	1.23	.03	8.02	.00	1.17 - 1.30
Employment	1.23	.07	3.81	.00	1.10 – 1.36
Income	1.05	.02	3.57	.00	1.02 - 1.08
Disability	.80	.05	-3.55	.00	.71 - .90
Use Special Equipment	.71	.07	-3.39	.00	.58 - .87
Race not specified *	.39	.03	-11.90	.00	.34- .46
White	.45	.04	-10.31	.00	.39 - .52

N=13, 025,863 (weighted pop. size), 30,141 observations

** Compared to non-white and non-Hispanics*