

BRFSS Brief

Number 1404

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an annual statewide telephone survey of adults developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administered by the New York State Department of Health. The BRFSS is designed to provide information on behaviors, risk factors, and utilization of preventive services related to the leading causes of chronic and infectious diseases, disability, injury, and death among the noninstitutionalized, civilian population aged 18 years and older.

Cervical Cancer Screening

New York State Adult Women, 2012

Introduction and Key Findings

In New York State (NYS), there are approximately 900 new cases of cervical cancer diagnosed each year, and nearly 300 women die from the disease annually.¹ All women are at risk for cervical cancer, but this risk is increased for women over the age of 30 and varies across racial groups. Black women are more likely than white women to be diagnosed with cervical cancer. Among women with cervical cancer, black women are more likely than white women to die from the disease.²

Cervical cancer is preventable through regular screening tests and follow-up. The Pap test (or Pap smear) is one of the most reliable and effective screening tests available to prevent cervical cancer. The Pap test detects cervical cell abnormalities that could become cervical cancer without proper treatment. The United States Preventive Services Task Force strongly recommends screening for cervical cancer in women aged 21 to 65 years with a Pap test every three years or, for women aged 30 to 65 years who want to lengthen the screening interval, screening with a combination of a Pap test and human papillomavirus (HPV) testing every 5 years.^{3,4}

In 2012, 82.6 percent of NYS women aged 21 to 65 years reported having a Pap test within the past three years, which is below the Healthy People 2020 goal of 93.0 percent of women aged 21 to 65 years to have received a cervical cancer screening based on the most recent guidelines.⁵ There are some subpopulations that are less likely to be screened. In NYS, women aged 21 to 29 years are significantly less likely to have received a Pap test in the past three years (66.9%) compared to women aged 30 to 65 years (87.0%). NYS women aged 21 to 65 years without health insurance are significantly less likely to have received a Pap test in the past three years (70.8%) compared to women aged 21 to 65 years with health insurance (84.9%). Similarly, NYS women aged 21 to 65 years without a regular health care provider are significantly less likely to have received a Pap test in the past three years (65.5%) compared to women aged 21 to 65 years with a regular health care provider (85.8%).

Black women are more likely than white women to be diagnosed with cervical cancer and die from the disease.² Black women are slightly less likely to be screened for cervical cancer (84.0%) compared to white women (86.6%), although the difference is not statistically significant.

BRFSS questions

1. A Pap test is a test for cancer of the cervix. Have you ever had a Pap test?

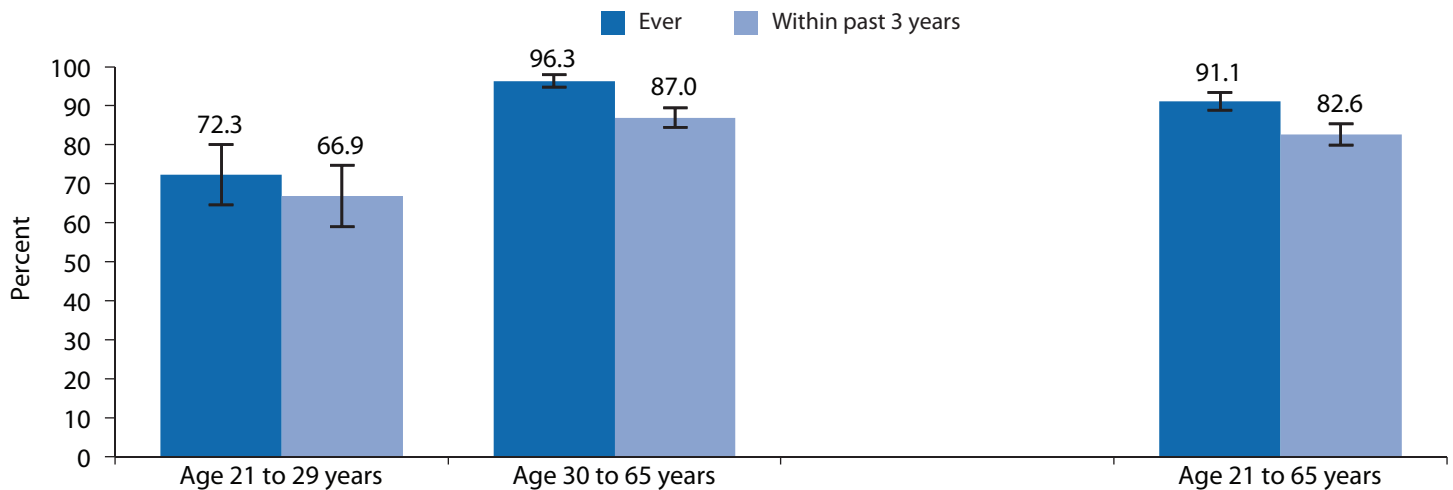
[If "yes":]

2. How long has it been since you had your last Pap test?

Changes to BRFSS Methodology

Beginning in 2011, BRFSS data includes data from interviews completed by people with cell phones in addition to interviews completed by people with landlines. The data also reflect changes in how the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) weight the data. Weighting ensures that the data collected are as representative of New York's population as possible. The new method of weighting enables more demographic information about the respondents to be incorporated into the weighting. While these two changes improve the accuracy of the BRFSS, they may result in prevalence estimates that are significantly different from those previously calculated. **Because of the differences in data collection, it is not appropriate to compare 2012 data to prior years and the BRFSS 2012 prevalence data should be considered a baseline year for data analysis.**

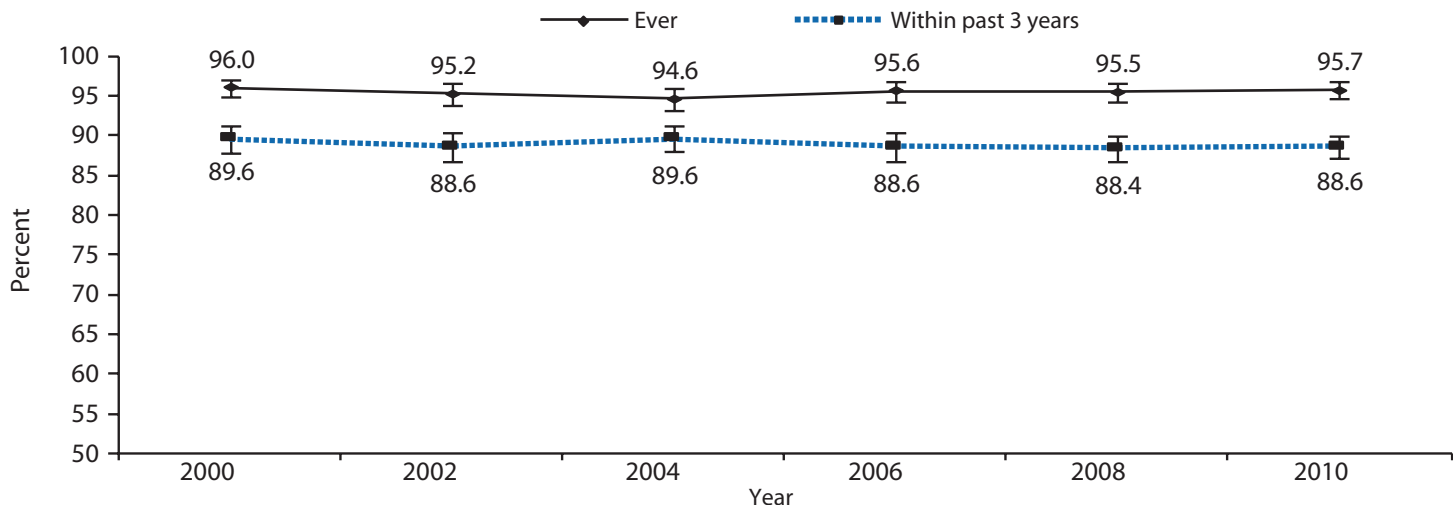
Figure 1. History of Pap test (ever, within past 3 years) among New York State women aged 21 to 29 and 30 to 65 years*, BRFSS 2012 survey year



Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

* Figure does not include data from women who reported having a hysterectomy.

Figure 2. History of Pap test (ever, within past 3 years) among New York State women aged 21 to 65 years*, by BRFSS survey year from 2000 to 2010



Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

* Figure does not include data from women who reported having a hysterectomy.

History of Pap test (ever, within past 3 years) among New York women aged 21 to 65 years, by selected characteristics , 2012 BRFSS

	Pap test history			
	Ever		Within past 3 years	
	% ^a	95% CI ^a	% ^a	95% CI ^a
New York State (NYS) [N=1,953]	91.1	88.8-93.4	82.6	79.9-85.4
Age (years)				
21-29	72.3	64.5-80.0	66.9	59.0-74.8
30-65	96.3	94.7-97.9	87.0	84.5-89.5
Race/Ethnicity				
White non-Hispanic	95.8	93.9-97.7	86.6	84.0-89.1
Black non-Hispanic	91.0	85.2-96.8	84.0	77.3-90.8
Hispanic	89.4	82.9-95.9	83.0	75.3-90.8
Other non-Hispanic	71.5	59.9-83.0	61.0	48.4-73.6
Annual household income				
<\$15,000	84.8	75.4-94.1	77.1	67.3-86.9
\$15,000-\$24,999	91.7	85.4-98.1	83.9	76.8-91.0
\$25,000-\$34,999	83.1	72.3-94.0	69.3	56.9-81.8
\$35,000-\$49,999	92.5	86.8-98.2	81.8	74.3-89.3
\$50,000-\$74,999	95.3	91.2-99.3	86.1	80.3-92.0
≥ \$75,000	95.8	93.3-98.4	89.0	84.8-93.1
Missing ^b	85.7	77.9-93.4	78.1	69.9-86.3
Educational attainment				
Less than high school	94.3	89.8-98.7	83.8	76.0-91.7
High school or GED	88.3	81.6-95.0	79.7	72.7-86.6
Some post-high school	89.4	84.6-94.2	79.0	73.1-84.8
College graduate	93.6	91.4-95.8	87.4	84.6-90.2
Health care coverage (insured)				
Yes	92.4	90.1-94.7	84.9	82.0-87.7
No	84.6	77.2-92.1	70.8	62.6-79.0
Regular health care provider				
Yes	93.2	91.0-95.3	85.8	83.0-88.5
No	80.2	71.6-88.7	65.5	56.8-74.2
Disability^c				
Yes	97.2	94.5-99.9	86.1	81.3-90.8
No	90.0	87.3-92.7	82.0	78.8-85.1
Residence				
New York City (NYC)	87.5	83.2-91.7	79.8	74.8-84.8
NYS exclusive of NYC	94.2	92.0-96.4	85.1	82.3-87.8

^a %=Percentage; 95% CI=Confidence interval (at the 95 percent probability level). Percentages are weighted to population characteristics.

^b "Missing" category included because more than 10% of the sample did not report income.

^c All respondents who report activity limitations due to physical, mental, or emotional problems OR have health problems that require the use of special equipment.

References

- 1 Cervical Cancer Incidence and Mortality by Year, New York State, 1976-2010. New York State Cancer Registry. New York State Department of Health, revised on Nov. 2013. Available at <http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/cancer/registry/table2/tb2cervixnys.htm>
- 2 Cancer Incidence and Mortality by Race, New York State, 2006-2010. New York State Cancer Registry. New York State Department of Health, revised on Nov. 2013. Available at <http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/cancer/registry/table4.htm>
- 3 Screening for Cervical Cancer, recommendation statement. U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, Rockville, MD, updated on Jun. 2012. Available at <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/uspsscerv.htm>
- 4 What should I know about screening? Cervical Cancers, Division of Cancer Prevention and Control, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, updated on Mar. 2014. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/basic_info/screening.htm
- 5 HealthyPeople.gov, 2020 Topics and Objectives: Cancer. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, updated on Aug. 2013. Available at <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/objectiveslist.aspx?topicId=5>

Program Contributions

New York State Department of Health
Bureau of Chronic Disease Evaluation and Research
Bureau of Chronic Disease Control

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