

BRFSS Brief

Number 1509

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, 2014

Introduction and Key Findings

In New York State (NYS), approximately 850 cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed each year and nearly 300 women die from the disease annually.¹ All women are at risk for cervical cancer, but risk is increased for women over the age of 30 and varies across racial groups.^{2,3} Black women are more likely than white women to be diagnosed with cervical cancer and, among women with cervical cancer, black women are more likely than white women to die from the disease.³

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 recommends screening for cervical cancer for women ages 21 to 65 years with a Pap test every three years or, for women ages 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.^{4,5}

In 2014, 82.6% 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%.^{4,6} Some subpopulations are less likely to receive cervical cancer screening. In NYS, women aged 21 to 29 years are significantly less likely to have received a Pap test in the past three years (72.6%) compared to women aged 30 to 65 years (85.5%) (Table 1). 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 (64.4%) compared to those with health insurance (86.2%) (Figure 2). Similarly, women aged 21 to 65 years without a regular health care provider are significantly less likely to have been screened in the past three years (63.2%) compared to women with a regular health care provider (86.2%) (Figure 2).

Of NYS women aged 21 to 65 years who have not received a Pap test within the past three years (an estimated 824,000 women), 73.0% were insured and 68.1% had a regular health care provider (data not shown). These data indicate a need to improve screening in both the insured and uninsured populations.

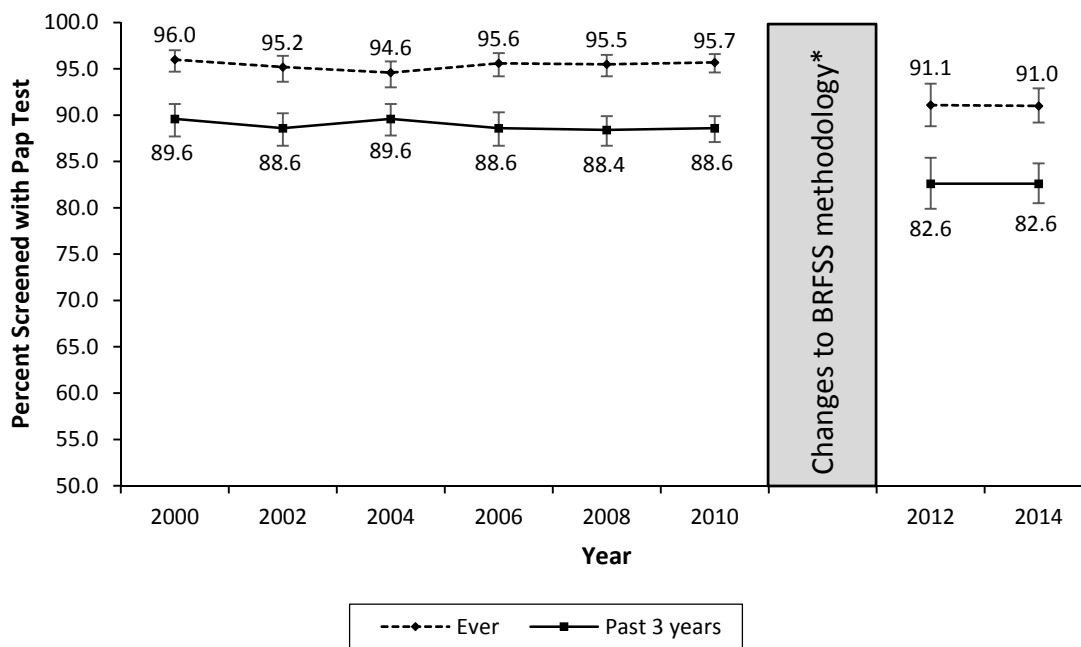
BRFSS Questions

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?

Figure 1. 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 2014**

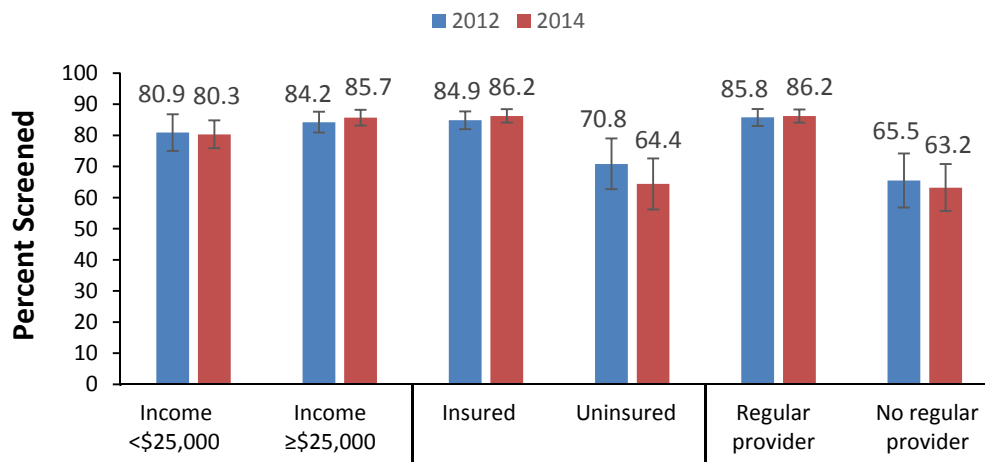


*Data from 2012 and 2014 are not comparable to prior years because of changes to the BRFSS methods in 2011. See the following link for more information on these changes: http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6122a3.htm?s_cid=mm6122a3_w

**Figure excludes data from women who reported having a hysterectomy.

Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 2. Percent screened by Pap test within the past 3 years among New York State women aged 21 to 65 years* by income, insurance and regular health care provider status, BRFSS 2012 and 2014 survey years



*Figure excludes data from women who reported having a hysterectomy.

Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Table 1. History of Pap test (ever, within past 3 years) among New York State women aged 21 to 65 years, by selected characteristics, BRFSS 2014 survey

	Estimated population size ^a	Pap test ever		Pap test within past 3 yrs	
		% ^b	95% CI ^b	% ^b	95% CI ^b
Total NYS [N=2,080]	4,767	91.0	89.2-92.9	82.6	80.5-84.8
Age					
21-29 years	1,052	75.2	68.7-81.6	72.6	66.0-79.2
30-65 years	3,715	95.5	94.3-96.8	85.5	83.5-87.5
Race/Ethnicity					
White non-Hispanic	2,637	95.1	93.0-97.1	84.9	82.3-87.5
Black non-Hispanic	719	91.8	88.1-95.6	87.0	82.3-91.6
Hispanic	813	91.7	88.0-95.4	85.7	81.1-90.4
Other non-Hispanic	511	69.7	59.9-79.6	63.3	53.1-73.4
Annual household income					
< \$25,000	1,146	89.0	85.2-92.8	80.3	75.9-84.8
\$25,000 - <\$50,000	934	94.0	90.8-97.1	83.8	79.3-88.2
≥ \$50,000	2,092	93.8	91.1-96.4	86.6	83.5-89.6
Missing ^c	595	80.7	73.4-87.9	71.3	63.3-79.3
Educational attainment					
Less than high school	595	88.5	83.0-94.0	77.2	69.8-84.7
High school or GED	992	92.5	89.3-95.8	83.3	79.0-87.5
Some post-high school	1,417	87.9	83.4-92.4	80.5	75.7-85.2
College graduate	1,743	93.6	91.4-95.9	85.9	83.1-88.8
Primary health care coverage					
Private insurance	2,814	94.2	92.2-96.3	86.8	84.3-89.3
Public or other insurance ^d	1,069	92.0	88.5-95.4	84.7	80.6-88.8
No insurance	559	76.5	68.8-84.2	64.4	56.2-72.6
Regular health care provider					
Yes	4,029	93.7	92.0-95.4	86.2	84.1-88.3
No	713	76.0	68.6-83.3	63.2	55.7-70.8
Limitation^e					
Yes	829	94.0	89.7-98.2	83.3	78.3-88.4
No	3,913	90.6	88.5-92.6	82.6	80.2-85.0
Disability^f					
Yes	881	91.8	87.2-96.3	79.2	73.6-84.8
No	3,850	90.8	88.8-92.8	83.3	81.0-85.7
Residence					
New York City (NYC)	2,128	86.9	83.7-90.1	80.6	77.1-84.1
NYS excluding NYC	2,639	94.4	92.3-96.5	84.3	81.6-87.1

^a Estimated population size based on weighted frequencies from BRFSS, in thousands. Excludes individuals with missing data on cervical cancer screening and each characteristic of interest, and women who reported having a hysterectomy.

^b %=Percentage; 95% CI=Confidence Interval. Percentages are weighted to population characteristics.

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

^d Health care coverage through Medicare; Medicaid or other state program; TRICARE, VA, or Military; Alaska Native, Indian Health Service, or Tribal Health Services; or some other source

^e Activity limitations due to physical, mental, or emotional problems OR health problems that require the use of special equipment.

^f Based on report of at least one type of disability (cognitive, ambulatory, vision, self-care, or independent living).

References

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6. HealthyPeople.gov, 2020 Topics and Objectives: Cancer. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, updated Oct. 2015. Available at <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/cancer/objectives>

Program Contributions

New York State Department of Health
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Bureau of Chronic Disease Control

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