



Assessing and improving patient's awareness of breast & cervical cancer screening recommendations

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Site Placement: Central Mississippi Health Services, Jackson, MS



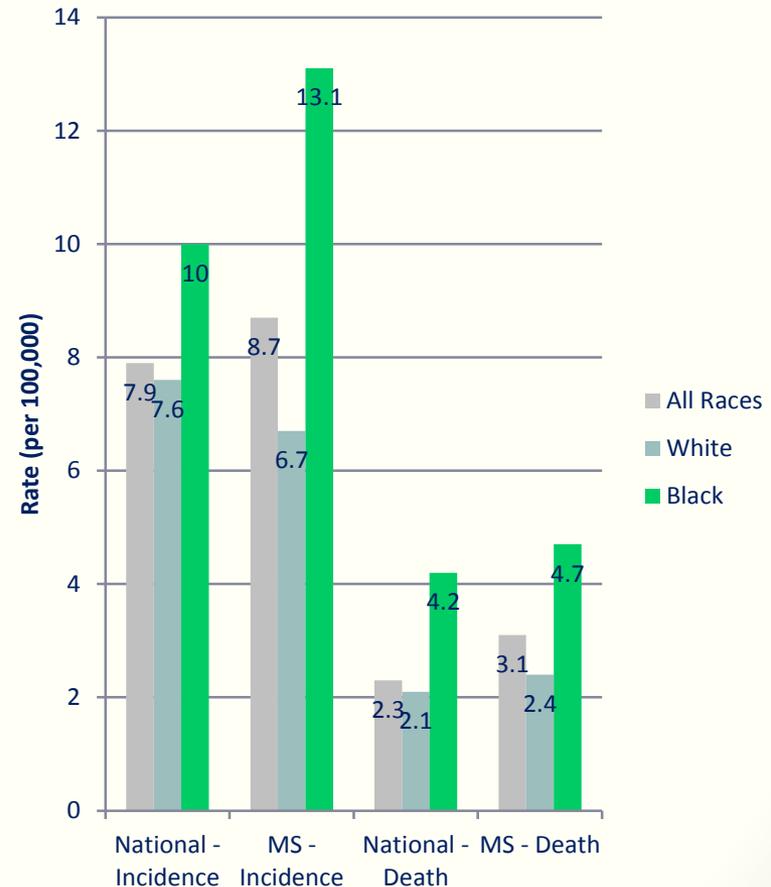
Introduction

- Initial focus on nutrition and pregnancy
- Upon arrival at CMHS, changed focus to female patients and gynecological needs
- Identified health literacy as an issue
- Updates to breast and cervical cancer screening recommendations
- Organizations produced conflicting recommendations
- → Evaluate knowledge of screening recommendations
- → Assess current screening practices
- → Educate about screening recommendations

Background

- Breast and cervical cancer screening can prevent morbidity and mortality
 - Screening includes: mammograms, clinical breast exams, and pap smears
- Need in Mississippi
 - Mississippi breast cancer incidence rates are less than national rates, but death rates are greater.
 - Mississippi cervical cancer incidence and death rates are greater than national rates.
 - There is also a racial disparity between rates

Fig 1. 2009 Cervical Cancer





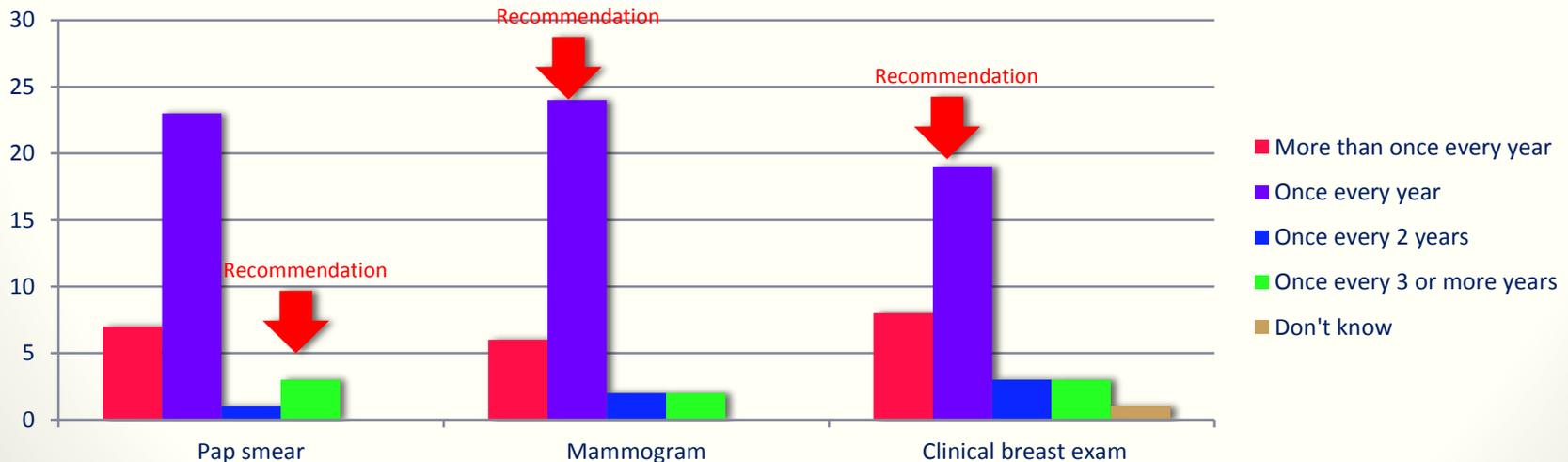
Methodology

- Surveyed patients' knowledge of screening recommendations and their relevant health history & current screening practices
- Provided information to patients on breast & cervical cancer recommendations.
- Discussed with patients when they felt they should be screening in the future based on the recommendations and their personal health history
- Used clinic data to evaluate clinic's effectiveness in adhering to recommendations

Results

- During the 3 week survey period I talked with 34 female patients
- Patients' understanding of recommendations was limited, but many women were receiving screenings according to recommendation.
 - 5% of respondents knew to start pap smears at age 21, 18% knew to start mammograms at age 40.
 - Across all screening methods, most women thought screening should be done on an annual basis.
 - 63% of women age 40-75 had received a mammogram within the past year. 88% of women age 21-65 had received a pap smear within the past 3 years.

Figure 3. "In general, how often do you think a woman should have a _____?"





Discussion

- Respondents were reflective of CMHS patient population
- Knowledge of screening was limited
- Actual screening practices were closer to recommendations
- Patients were receptive to learning about recommendations
- Many respondents were unaware of available free screening
- CMHS should increase mammogram screening
 - Currently not screening all eligible patients
 - Pap smear data inconclusive

Recommendations

- Providers should continue to remind patients when they are due for a screening
 - Explain why and what tests are being used for
 - Collect a thorough health history, including relevant risk factors (family history of breast cancer, hysterectomy, sexual activity))
 - Refer patients to resources
- Use brochures and community resources to promote regular screening
 - Mississippi Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program
- Recommendations for future scholar projects
 - Resources of community assistance funds for preventive screening
 - Health education posters for patient rooms

What is the Mississippi Breast and Cervical Cancer Program?

Through education and free screenings, the program aims to prevent or find breast and cervical cancer in the earliest stage. Free screening services are available based on income and household size.

Who qualifies for the program?

The program serves women who are between the ages of 40 and 64, have little or no income, and are medically uninsured or underinsured.

What does medically uninsured or underinsured mean?

Medically uninsured means a person has no medical insurance; medically underinsured means a person does not have private insurance, Medicaid or Medicare that covers the screening.

What kind of services does the program provide?

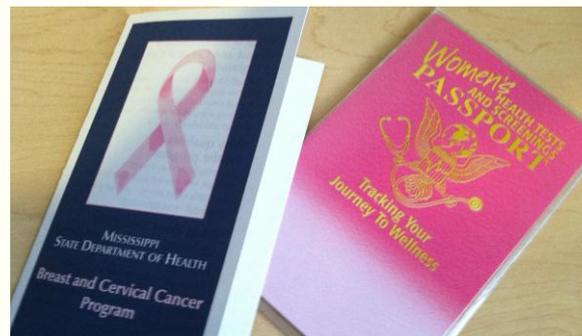
If you are 50 years or older:

- blood pressure and weight
- clinical breast exam
- pelvic exam and Pap test
- professional counseling
- screening mammogram
- health education materials

If you are 40-49 years of age:

- blood pressure and weight
- pelvic exam and Pap test
- clinical breast exam
- professional counseling
- diagnostic mammograms (if symptomatic)
- health education materials

If you are 18-39 years of age and are experiencing problems related to your breast or cervix you should call 1-800-721-7222 for more information.





Conclusion

- Knowledge is limited, yet screening practices are closer to recommendations
- Improving patients awareness of screening tools is important



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