Uptake of Pap smears among women in a large Israeli HMO between 2006 and 2008.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES:
The Papanicolaou (Pap) smear test is used in many countries as a screening procedure for cervical cancer and precancerous lesions. The actual uptake of this screening test among women at risk for cervical cancer is unknown. The aim of this study was to estimate the percentage of women who are screened by Pap smears from the relevant population at risk, and to detect factors that are independently associated with uptake of cervical screening.

STUDY DESIGN:
Retrospective database study.

METHODS:
This study was undertaken at Maccabi Healthcare Services (MHS), the second largest publicly funded health maintenance organization in Israel. The study population consisted of Israeli women aged 21-59 years who were insured by MHS between 2006 and 2008. Logistic regression analyses were used to determine the independent relationships between immigration and socio-economic status and cervical screening.

RESULTS:
The study population included 489,663 women who had a total of 313,602 Pap smears between 2006 and 2008. Fifty-four percent of the women did not have a Pap smear during the study period, 32% had at least one smear, and 14% had at least two smears. Living in a low socio-economic neighbourhood and recent immigration were independently and negatively associated with screening uptake.

CONCLUSION:
Despite the clinical guidelines and the low costs, many Israeli women who are at risk for cervical cancer are not screened.

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