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Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Among Publicly Insured Urban Women: No Knowledge of Tests and No Clinician Recommendation

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Objectives

: To assess barriers to colorectal cancer screening among urban publicly insured women and to evaluate how barriers among underscreened urban women have changed between 2001 and 2007-2008.

Methods

: Eligible women were selected using Medic-aid Managed Care Organization (MMCO) administrative data. MMCO outreach staff interviewed women by phone between October 2007 and February 2008, and assessed their barriers to colorectal cancer screening. We compared the results of these interviews with interviews conducted in 2001 with women in community health center waiting rooms.

Results

: Thirty percent of overdue women had never heard of either colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy, and 55% had never heard of home fecal occult blood testing (FOBT). Among overdue women who had heard of colonoscopy or sigmoid-oscropy, 33% reported misconceptions and 28% reported worry as a barrier. No clinician recommendation was the most commonly reported barrier to home FOBT (44%) and was also reported as a barrier to endoscopy by 22% of women. Between 2001 and 2007-2008, the proportion of women reporting that they had not received a clinician's recommendation for endoscopy or home FOBT increased significantly.

Conclusions

: A lack of information, no clinician recommendation, misconceptions, and worry persist as barriers to colon cancer screening among this underscreened urban population. An increased focus on clinician recommendation and patient education about stool-based as well as endoscopic screening methods could lead to greater screening compliance.

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Keywords

colorectal cancer; screening; barriers; women's health; urban population

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