



October 31, 1998  
Kathy Harben  
(770)488-5131

## **Facts About Cervical Cancer Screening Among Low-Income Women: Results of a National Screening Program, 1991-1995**

Data from one of the largest screening programs for cervical cancer for women 18 years and older—the CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program—for the years 1991-1995 show that having regularly scheduled Pap smears is a very effective way to identify precancerous lesions that can be treated and cured before they progress to cervical cancer.

During the 4 years studied, nearly 313,000 women had Pap smears:

- about one-fourth were younger than 30 and more than half were 40 or older;
- about half were of racial and ethnic minorities; and
- 61% reported having had a Pap smear before enrollment in the program.

More than 400,000 Pap smears were performed during the 4-year period; among those, about 8,100 precancerous lesions and 150 cases of invasive cervical cancer were identified.

Precancerous lesions were more likely to be found than invasive cervical cancer in both younger and older women.

Older women were most at risk of being diagnosed with cervical cancer.

The full text of this report can be found in *Obstetrics and Gynecology* 1998;92(5): 745-752.

The CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program provides cancer screening services at no or reduced cost to low-income, underserved, and underinsured women known to be at increased risk of being diagnosed with and dying from cervical cancer. Through March 1998, more than 950,000 Pap tests have been provided. For more information about the program, see <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dcpc/nbccedp/index.htm/>