

Benefits of thyroid screening unclear

27 October 2014

Researchers for the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) suggest that more research is needed to determine the benefits of screening asymptomatic individuals for thyroid dysfunction. Their review is being published in [Annals of Internal Medicine](#).

An estimated 5 percent of women and 3 percent of men in the U.S. have undiagnosed [thyroid dysfunction](#), and about 0.5 percent of the population may have undiagnosed overt thyroid disease. Thyroid screening could identify persons who could benefit from treatments to reduce the risk of associated adverse health outcomes, such as [coronary artery disease](#), [congestive heart failure](#), atrial fibrillation, and decreased bone density. In 2004, the USPSTF found insufficient evidence to recommend for or against routine thyroid screening in asymptomatic adults.

Researchers reviewed randomized controlled trials and observational studies of screening and treatment published through July 2014 to inform an updated recommendation. No trials directly assessed the benefits and harms of screening versus no screening. While screening can identify patients with subclinical thyroid dysfunction or undiagnosed overt thyroid disease, more research is needed to understand the effects of treatment.

A draft recommendation statement on screening for thyroid dysfunction will be posted to the USPSTF website for public comment at <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org>.

Provided by American College of Physicians

APA citation: Benefits of thyroid screening unclear (2014, October 27) retrieved 12 October 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-10-benefits-thyroid-screening-unclear.html>

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