

Can patient navigators reduce no-shows for cancer screening follow-up?

July 23 2015

Researchers at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital reported a 20% decline in the rate of missed appointments for cervical cancer evaluation following a Pap smear when a patient navigator program was initiated at the referral center. The impact of the program and the main reasons for patient no-shows are explored in an article in *Journal of Women's Health*.

In "Effect of Patient Navigator Program on No-Show Rates at an Academic Referral Colposcopy Clinic," Rebecca Lockett, MD, MPH and coauthors from Brigham and Women's Hospital and Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, describe how specially trained, culturally sensitive patient navigators can guide patients through [cancer](#) care. With the appropriate support and assistance, vulnerable patient populations such as African American, Hispanic, and publicly insured women may gain access to improved follow-up care, helping reduce the large racial and socioeconomic disparities in the incidence of and death due to [cervical cancer](#).

"Reducing no-show rates is an important factor in improving health care to vulnerable patient populations, and this study demonstrates the benefit of a patient navigator program in increasing compliance with cervical cancer screening and treatment," says Susan G. Kornstein, MD, Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Women's Health*, Executive Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health, Richmond, VA, and President of the Academy of Women's Health.

More information: [online.liebertpub.com/doi/full ...
0.1089/jwh.2014.5111](https://online.liebertpub.com/doi/full/10.1089/jwh.2014.5111)

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

Citation: Can patient navigators reduce no-shows for cancer screening follow-up? (2015, July 23) retrieved 13 January 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-07-patient-no-shows-cancer-screening-follow-up.html>

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