



# Age and Race Differences and their Relation to Women's Knowledge of Health Issues Regarding Cervical Cancer

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## Abstract

In 2007 an estimated 11,150 women may be infected with cervical cancer. The most important factor about cervical cancer is that it is detectable through pap screenings and also curable if caught at an early stage. Cervical cancer is a slow growing cancer that mutates the cells around the cervix and if not caught at an early stage does have the potential to spread to other parts of the body.

This study used questionnaires distributed by community health care workers to groups throughout Michigan participating in the Kin Keeper<sup>SM</sup> Cancer Prevention Intervention. The questionnaire analyzed the women's knowledge of cervical cancer with questions regarding screening behaviors and awareness.

African American women and Latinas were used within the population. Age and race based on six factors were analyzed in an attempt to discover the barriers of screening behaviors and access or lack of information to these groups.

## Purpose

Although cancer is usually viewed as a death sentence it is important to change people's stereotype on cervical cancer. It is preventable and potentially curable therefore the mortality rate should either not exist or should be at a lower rate.

Observing the interactions of age and race as primary factors of understanding and knowledge possessed of a disease will lead to a reason of why African Americans and Latinas have the highest incident and mortality rates for cervical cancer. There are a lot of factors to address when looking at people individually but viewing a population of people may help in understanding the apprehension to screenings and seeking medical advice.

## Literature

The literature regarding cervical cancer has several themes that this study focuses on as primary factors within both populations:

1. Cultural perceptions
2. Health care access issues
3. Outreach
4. Education
5. Social networks
6. Age differences

These six themes have been found as the most influential on the knowledge that women possess about cervical cancer.

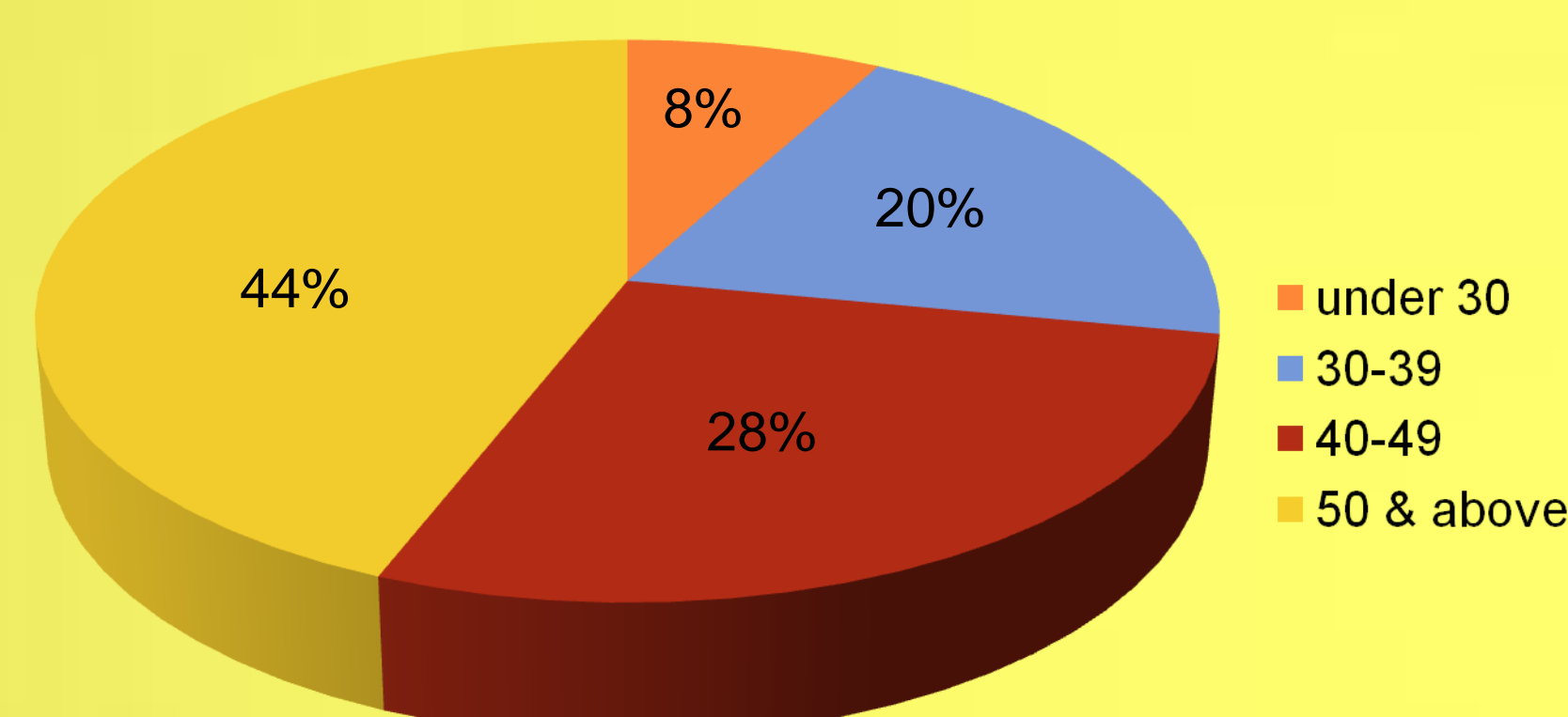
## Methods

Questionnaires were collected through the Kin Keeper<sup>SM</sup> Prevention Intervention throughout the Dearborn, Grand Rapids, and Detroit areas. The database Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to house the data collected from the questionnaires. Independent t-tests were used to analyze the data regarding nominal variables such as questionnaire scores and age or household income, etc. An ANOVA was used to test for multiple variables such as education, race, and test scores.

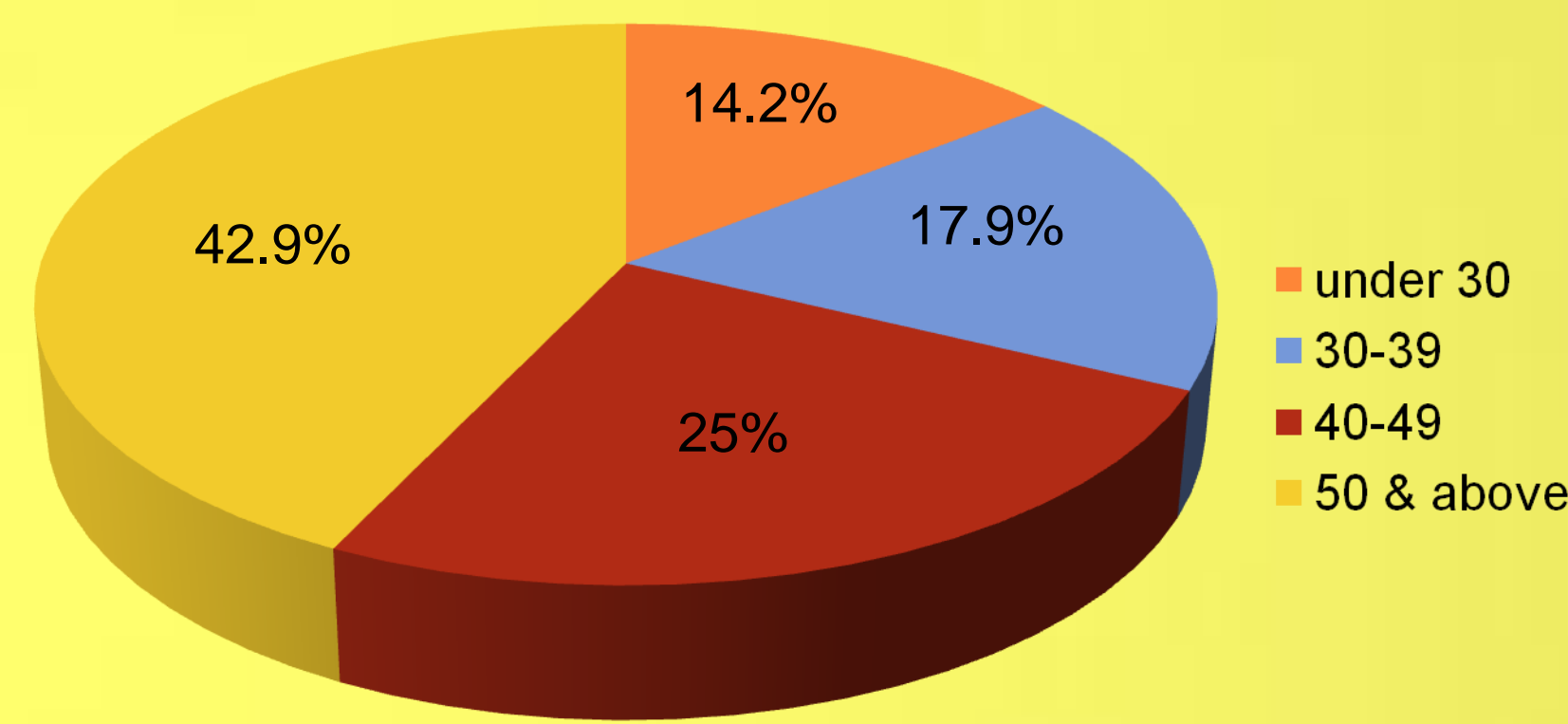
## Results

Some results did not show significance when the data was interpreted, however, previous studies used sample populations larger than the one analyzed in this study. This could be a possible explanation of why my data was not found to be significant using a 95% confidence level.

Age Groups of African American Women



Age Groups of Latinas



2-Tailed Significance Levels of African Americans Compared with Questionnaire Scores

Question	Age	Education	Insurance
Although there are many different names for types of cancers you can get them the same way.	.486	0.545	0.328
Cervical cancer is preventable.	.658	0.166	0.955
A Pap test is used to detect any abnormal cell in a woman's cervix.	.465	0.166	0.707
A woman should begin to have a Pap test after she becomes sexually active or when she turns 21, which ever comes first.	.830	0.166	0.794
A woman should get a Pap test every three years if her previous results were normal.	.103	0.545	0.794
A woman is at risk for getting cervical cancer if she has unprotected sexual intercourse.	.245	0.753	0.825
If your mother had cervical cancer, you are at risk for getting cervical cancer.	.083	0.166	0.164

2-Tailed Significance Levels of Latinas Compared with Questionnaire Scores

Question	Age	Marital Status	Language	Insurance
Although there are many different names for types of cancers you can get them the same way.	.704	1	0.123	0.328
Cervical Cancer is preventable.	.174	0.17	0.28	0.955
A Pap test is used to detect any abnormal cell in a woman's cervix.	.141	0.598	0.626	0.707
A woman should begin to have a Pap test after she becomes sexually active or when she turns 21, which ever comes first.	.931	0.862	0.173	0.794
A woman should get a Pap test every three years if her previous results were normal.	.390	0.552	0.301	0.794
A woman is at risk for getting cervical cancer if she has unprotected sexual intercourse.	.704	0.332	0.123	0.825
If your mother had cervical cancer, you are at risk for getting cervical cancer.	.163	0.163	0.163	0.164

## Conclusions

When addressing age and race as factors for knowledge of cervical cancer health providers should incorporate individual factors that affect the process of learning about health issues. In order to better influence the way people understand a disease it is important to address the barriers that they face, concerning in this instance, screening behaviors and basic cancer information.

In the case of cervical cancer alleviating fears that each ethnic group has is important. The fear of pap exams, autonomy, and communication barriers are concerns faced by Latinas and education/social networks and communication techniques are concerns for African Americans. Health care systems, regarding access and level of service, are issues both Latinas and African Americans face. Health care providers need to tailor their information to not only inform women about the biology for cancer but all the fears and concerns that prevent women from seeking information and screenings.

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