

Cervical Cancer Screening Practices and Resource Needs of Health Providers in Texas

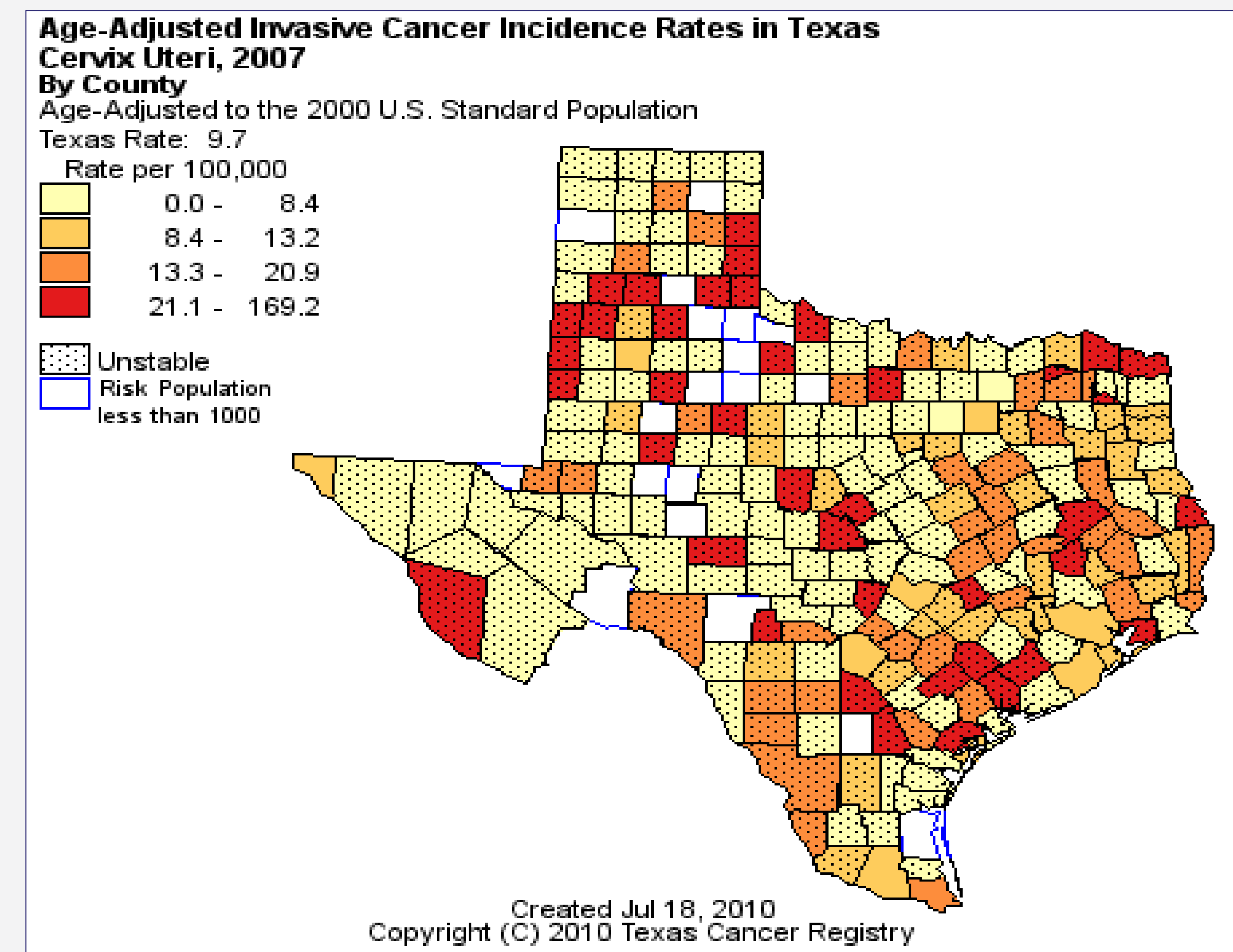


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Background

- In November 2009, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) issued revised recommendations regarding cervical cancer screening, including guidance on screening women less than age 21 years.
 - Old recommendation: begin screening at age 21 or 3 years after onset of sexual activity
 - New recommendation: begin screening at age 21, regardless of age of sexual debut
- Rates of cervical cancer incidence and mortality have declined in Texas; however, cervical cancer remains a serious threat.
- 50% of cervical cancers are diagnosed in women who have never or rarely been screened.
- Sexually active adolescent girls are at increased risk for acquiring Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and therefore are at increased risk for cervical cancer later in life.
- Given that over half of high school females in Texas report that they are sexually active (YRBS, 2009), there may exist missed opportunities to educate parents and girls about cervical cancer and provide HPV vaccine to young adolescent girls.
- One of the five goals of the Texas Cervical Cancer Strategic Plan is to enhance health care professionals' attitudes, knowledge, skills, and practices regarding cervical cancer screening, diagnosis, and treatment.
- While the majority of studies regarding cervical cancer screening practices have been conducted among women, this study ascertains practices and resource needs regarding cervical cancer screening among healthcare providers.

Background



Research Questions

- What are the cervical cancer screening practices of health providers in Texas?
- What are the cervical cancer screening resource needs of health providers in Texas?

Methods

- Electronic survey sent out to more than 30,000 healthcare professionals via two statewide continuing professional education organizations
 - Nurse Oncology Education Program
 - Physician Oncology Education Program
- Survey administration occurred in September 2009, during Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month.

Results

Table 1: Respondent Characteristics (n=175)

Credentials	Percent	Medical Specialty	Percent
MD/DO	5.1%	Family Practice	10.8%
NP	9.1%	Internal Medicine	5.7%
PA	8.0%	Pediatrics	7.4%
RN	69.1%	Internal Medicine/ Pediatrics	0.6%
LVN	5.7%	Oncology	13.6%
Other	2.9%	OB/GYN	19.3%
		Other*	42.6%

*Primarily included school and community/public health nursing

- 60.8% of respondents reported that their patient population includes adolescents
- Approximately 70% of respondents either do not provide (59.9%) or did not know if they could provide (9.3%) cervical cancer screening in their current practice setting
- 28.6% responded that they provide HPV vaccination in their office
- 24.1% of respondents indicated that they would benefit from evidence based cervical cancer screening guidelines and 17.4% indicated that they would benefit from information on the HPV vaccine.

Table 2: Cervical cancer screening methods (n=50)

Method	Percent*
Conventional Pap smear	36.0%
Liquid Pap test	76.0%
HPV testing	74.0%

*Percent do not sum to 100% since respondents were instructed to select all that apply.

Conclusion

- Among this population of providers, the majority of whom provide care to adolescents; most do not provide cervical cancer screening.
- However, almost one-quarter responded that they would benefit from information on evidence based cervical cancer screening guidelines.
- While these practices are consistent with current guidelines, this survey was conducted before revision of the national cervical cancer screening guidelines.
- This survey reveals that more information is needed about the screening practices of physicians, since the majority of respondents were nurses.

Limitations

- Small sample size and sample self selection bias limit generalizability of survey results to all provider members of the two oncology education programs.
- Further research is needed to learn about the cervical cancer screening practices and resource needs of women's health primary care providers, including physicians.

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