



Effective Health Care

Pap Testing

Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Pap testing was found to be addressed by an in-process AHRQ review titled *Screening for Cervical Cancer* being conducted to facilitate the update of the 2003 United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommendations on cervical cancer screening. Given that the in-process review covers this nomination, no further activity will be undertaken on this topic.
- To sign up for notification when this and other USPSTF topics are posted, please go to <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/prevenix.htm>.

Topic Description

Nominator: Individual

Nomination Summary: The nominator is interested in the comparative effectiveness of different tests to detect cervical cancer, specifically liquid-based and conventional cytology.

Staff-Generated PICO

Population(s): Women ages 18-45, premenopausal women and women engaging in high-risk sexual behavior. Subpopulations of interest include African Americans and Hispanics.

Intervention(s): Liquid-based cytology (SurePath, ThinPrep), cytology with fixative

Comparator(s): See interventions above

Outcome(s): Accuracy to detect cervical dysplasia and cancer

Key Questions from Nominator: 1. For women who have pap exams, what is the effectiveness of the various testing techniques to diagnose precancerous or cancerous cervical lesions?

Considerations

- Pap testing was found to be addressed by an in-process AHRQ review titled *Screening for Cervical Cancer*, which will be used to facilitate the update of the 2003 USPSTF recommendations on cervical cancer screening. Key questions from the update include:
 1. When should cervical cancer screening begin, and does this vary by screening technology or by age, sexual history, or other patient characteristics?
 2. **To what extent does liquid-based cytology improve sensitivity, specificity, and diagnostic yield and reduce indeterminate results and inadequate samples compared to conventional cervical cytology?**

3. What are the benefits of using HPV testing as a screening test, either alone or in combination with cytology, compared with not testing for HPV?
4. What are the harms of liquid-based cytology?
5. What are the harms of using HPV testing as a screening test, either alone or in combination with cytology?