Breast & Cervical Cancer Screening Access Amongst Seasonal and Migrant Farmworkers in Michigan’s Cherry Farming Region: An Investigative Survey

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Background

- 2.4 million migrant and seasonal farmworkers employed in U.S. as of 2014\(^1\).

- **Lack of official government data** on many undocumented migrant farmworkers make researching the health of this population difficult.

- A 2001 review suggests that although two thirds of migrant farmworkers in the United States were living in poverty, only 5-11% received health insurance from an employer, and only 7-11% percent were able to get Medicaid coverage, leading to **limited health care utilization**\(^1\).

- In New Jersey in 2008 migrant and seasonal farmworkers were said to be “**the most economically disadvantaged population in the nation**" and that “unhealthy working and living environments only add to increased rates of illness”\(^2\).

- A 2010 study in California found “elevated prevalence of indicators of chronic disease” but an overall **lack of healthcare access**\(^3\).
As conversations surrounding intersectionality grow, female migrant farmworkers in the United States deserve a strong presence in these dialogues. Combining the economic and health disparities faced by seasonal and migrant farmworkers with the societal disparity of being born both female and Latinx creates a population that is particularly vulnerable and in greater need of financial, political, and academic support.

Previous studies investigating barriers to breast and cervical cancer screening amongst this population have largely focused on defining theoretical barriers, and few studies have been conducted as interventions. 

Background
Objective

- To collect information to identify unique challenges specific to seasonal and migrant farmworkers when obtaining breast and cervical cancer screening tests.

- This will help us discover better ways to interact with and reach out to this population.

- With this knowledge, we hope to implement a cervical and breast cancer screening program that suits the needs of the local seasonal and migrant farmworker population.
**Methods**

- **Study Design:**
  - Investigative cross-sectional survey.

- **Subjects:**
  - Patients 21-85 years of age, born female sex, evaluated at Northwestern Michigan Health Services Incorporated during the Summer of 2021.

- **Data:**
  - Patients were given the option to voluntarily complete the breast and cervical cancer questionnaire in either Spanish or English.

- **Data Analysis:**
  - Each survey question was qualitatively analyzed to discern what barriers the population is facing.
Survey in English:

Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Questionnaire:

- What is your age? ______
- What is your ethnicity? ______
- What is your primary spoken language? ______
- If you are over the age of 21, have you had cervical cancer screening before?
  - YES
  - NO
  - < age 21
- If you are over the age of 40, have you had mammogram screening before?
  - YES
  - NO
  - < age 40
- When was the last time you were able to see a physician? ______________________
- Do you receive routine healthcare anywhere else?
  - YES
  - NO
- Do you have access to a phone?  YES  NO
- Do you have access to a computer and/or the internet?  YES  NO
- If your healthcare provider needed to contact you regarding test results, is there a way they can reliably reach you? (Check all that apply)
  - email
  - phone
  - patient portal
  - Other: ______________________
- If you were told you needed more tests or images, would you know where to go?
  - YES
  - NO
- Do you have access to transportation to obtain follow-up screenings or tests?
  - YES
  - NO
- Do you feel safe accessing healthcare resources?
  - YES
  - NO
  - UNSURE
  - What could we do differently to improve this? ______________________
- Do you live here permanently or come back to this area regularly?
  - Permanent resident
  - Part-time resident (e.g. seasonally)
  - Not a resident
  - If a part-time resident, how long do you live here at a time? ______________________
- Are you a seasonal farmworker or migrant farmworker?
  - YES
  - NO
  - I PREFER NOT TO SAY
- How do you get access to news/community events/etc. (e.g. radio, TV, newspaper, community bulletin):
### Results: Demographics

#### Table 1: Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Population (N=5)</th>
<th>Local Population (n=3)</th>
<th>Migrant/Seasonal Population (n=2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean (range)</td>
<td>49.8 (38 - 60)</td>
<td>44.7 (38 - 50)</td>
<td>57.5 (55 - 60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2 No response</td>
<td>1 Latina/Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Hispanic</td>
<td>1 Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Completed in English</strong></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Completed in Spanish</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Primary Language</strong></td>
<td>20%*</td>
<td>33%*</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spanish Primary Language</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One participant listed both Spanish and English as primary language*
Clinically Relevant Results

- Only one participant had a pap smear before, and they identified as a migrant/seasonal worker.

- All eligible participants have had a mammogram.

- Only two participants knew where they could get follow up care if instructed they needed further testing or imaging.
Results: Social Determinants of Health

- 80% of participants responded to question regarding feeling safe while accessing care.
  - One participant who responded they **did not** feel safe identified as a migrant worker.
  - One participant who did not respond was local.

- Of the three participants who answered the question “how do you get access to news/community events/etc, all answered TV and one included phone.
Main Points:

● Routine Pap smears were noted to be a large deficit in care for this population.

● All eligible participants received mammogram screening.

● All participants identified Spanish as a primary language. We need to ensure we have good translators as well as all patient education materials available in Spanish.

● 80% of participants responded to question regarding feeling safe while accessing care. No participants wrote any suggestions regarding ways to improve this.
Discussion: Limitations

- Limitations:
  - Only 5 surveys completed, two identified as migrant/seasonal farm workers.
  - Only one department administered the questionnaire to the population of interest.
  - Surveys were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic and we cannot rule out that this may have contributed to feelings of lack of safety.
Next Steps:

○ Due to the limited number of responses we received from our survey, a repeat study could be conducted at multiple clinics or at a base camp for migrant workers.

○ With more robust results, we could then work with clinics to identify gaps in care and remove barriers to create a health screening program directly available to our local, migrant, and seasonal farmworkers.
References

We would like to thank Dr. Jean Kerver, Dr. Kelly Hirko, and Gladys Muñoz for their help and guidance during this process. We would like to thank Northwestern Michigan Health Services Incorporated for helping us administering the survey to their patients.
Questions?

Thank you!