



U.S. Preventive Services Task Force

Literature Surveillance Report

Title: Screening with the Pelvic Examination for Gynecological Conditions

Literature Surveillance Date: November 2020

Recommendation Summary: In 2017, the Task Force concluded that the current evidence was insufficient to assess the balance of benefits and harms of performing pelvic examinations in asymptomatic women for the early detection and treatment of a range of gynecologic conditions (**Grade: I statement**).

Research Gaps From Previous Task Force Review: The 2017 recommendation was based on an evidence review with a search through July 2016. The Task Force found insufficient evidence and the need for more research on:

- The accuracy and effectiveness of the pelvic exam to detect conditions other than ovarian cancer, bacterial vaginosis, genital herpes, and trichomoniasis;
- Harms of the pelvic exam;
- The effects of routine screening pelvic exam on health outcomes;
- The potential effectiveness of risk assessment tools to determine which women might benefit from a pelvic exam; and
- Women's attitudes toward pelvic exams, the outcomes women value from these exams, and how pelvic exams affect women's decisions to seek and obtain care.

Summary of New Evidence: Literature scans were conducted in the MEDLINE database and the Cochrane library. Results were limited to English language, core clinical and specialty journals, 2016 to present.

We found no new studies related to the benefits or harms of screening.

We identified one diagnostic accuracy study. As part of the Prostate, Lung, Colorectal and Ovarian (PLCO) cancer screening trial, eligible women aged 55-74 (N = 20,872) received at least one bimanual ovarian palpation during the first four years of the trial, with nearly 50,500 total palpations performed.¹

A two phase survey of women's beliefs and the effect of professional organization recommendations on desire for routine pelvic examination was conducted in 2015–2016.^{2,3}

References

1. Doroudi M, Kramer BS, Pinsky PF. The bimanual ovarian palpation examination in the Prostate, Lung, Colorectal and Ovarian cancer screening trial: Performance and complications. *Journal of Medical Screening*. 2017;24(4):220-222.
2. Sawaya GF, Smith-McCune KK, Gregorich SE, Moghadassi M, Kuppermann M. Effect of professional society recommendations on women's desire for a routine pelvic examination. *Am J Obstet Gynecol*. 2017;217(3):338.e331-338.e337.
3. Norrell LL, Kuppermann M, Moghadassi MN, Sawaya GF. Women's beliefs about the purpose and value of routine pelvic examinations. *Am J Obstet Gynecol*. 2017;217(1):86.e81-86.e86.