

The Relationship Between Health Insurance and the Likelihood of the Utilization of Reproductive Health Screenings in College Students



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OBJECTIVE

To investigate if there is an association between having private insurance and a greater likelihood of utilizing reproductive health screenings among UCSD undergraduate students.

BACKGROUND

- In 2021, only **59% of women aged 18-64 obtained a pap smear test**, in addition to **28% of this cohort having received an STI test**
- Delays in routine screenings increase risks for late detections of **HPV, cervical or breast cancer, infertility or pregnancy complications**, and **preventable mortality**
- Previous literature has found a **positive association** between the exposure and outcome, **but has been insufficient in studying college students**



METHODS

- Cross-sectional study:** distributed to UCSD undergraduate students via social media platforms (Instagram, Discord, Reddit)
- Anonymous, 8 question qualitative** online Google Forms Survey
- Exposure:** Respondent's current primary source of health insurance (private, public)
- Outcome:** Likelihood of utilizing reproductive health screenings within the past 2 years (pap smear, HPV test, STI screening, clinical breast exam, testicular exam)
 - Likert scale sum score: higher score indicates greater likelihood of utilizing screenings with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 20
- SPSS Software:** Spearman's Correlation Coefficient

Survey!



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RESULTS

Sample Characteristics	N= 49
Age (%)	
18-19	14.30%
20-21	63.30%
22-23	20.40%
24+	2%

63.3% of respondents were 20-21 years old

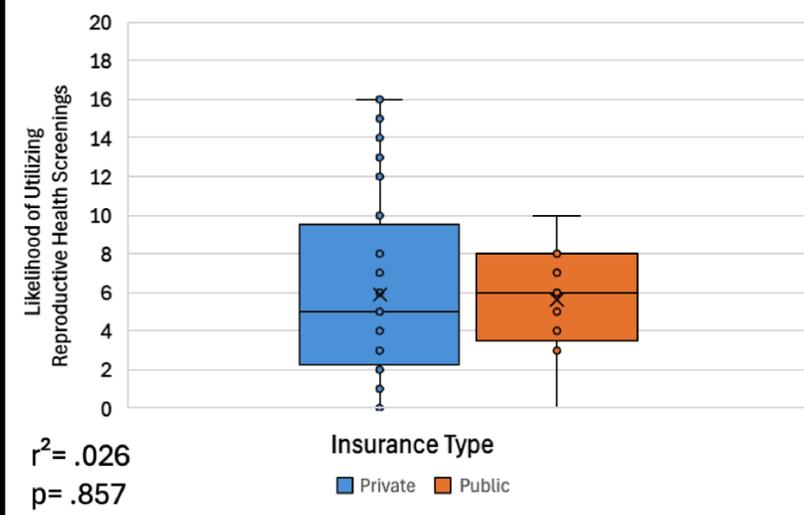
73.5% of participants were female

Gender identity (%)	
Trans man	6.10%
Trans woman	0%
Gender queer/gender non-conforming	4.10%
Female	73.50%
Male	12.20%
Two-spirit	0%
Dont know	4.10%

Race/Ethnicity (%)	
White	38.80%
Black or African American	8.20%
Asian	42.90%
AIAN (American Indian and Alaska Native)	0%
Pacific Islander (includes Native Hawaiians)	0%
Middle Eastern and North African (MENA)	2%
Hispanic or Latino	26.50%

42.9% of participants were of Asian descent

Figure 1: Correlation Between Insurance Type and Likelihood of Reproductive Care Use



Spearman's Correlation Coefficient:
 $r^2 = .026, p = 0.857$

- A **positive correlation** was found between having **public insurance and utilizing more reproductive screenings** (even though Figure 1 demonstrates a higher cumulative sum score among participants privately insured)
- A **p-value of 0.857** indicates **no statistical significance** between health insurance type and the utilization of reproductive screenings

CONCLUSION

- Our results do not support our hypothesis.
 - May be due to larger number of privately insured participants responding to the survey.
 - Participants also expressed lack of health literacy regarding care they had access to.
- Our sample size (49) was likely too small to be statistically significant. Further research should increase sample size and take measures to ensure more even demographic distribution.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Improving **health literacy** to improve access to timely reproductive health services and support financially disadvantaged individuals.
- Expand **affordable insurance coverage** and train healthcare providers in **cultural competence** can boost and encourage the utilization of reproductive health screenings.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all participants who completed the research survey, alongside the Department of Public Health and Professor Marquez for their guidance and assistance.