

New research finds annual well visit increases likelihood of preventive services

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A new Harvey L. Neiman Health Policy Institute study assesses the effect of receiving an Annual Wellness Visit (AWV) between 2011 and 2013 on the annual rate of eight preventive services recommended for the Medicare population following the AWV. The study is published online in *Preventive Medicine*.

"The annual wellness visit assesses patients' health risk factors, reviews medical and family history, and more importantly, develops or updates a personalized prevention plan that includes a screening schedule for appropriate preventive services," said Miao Jiang, Ph.D., lead study author and senior consultant at IQVIA. "Our study provides important evidence that annual wellness visits improve the delivery of preventive services in the elderly population."

Jiang and her co-investigators used retrospective Medicare claims from 2009-2014 for a 5% national sample of fee-for-service beneficiaries in the United States. Among 845,318 patients who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 23% had an AWV in 2011-2013. The percentage of preventive services among AWV participants ranged from 7.6% (vs. 4.9% for non-AWV participants) for [prostate cancer screening](#) to 63.3% (vs. 56.8% for non-AWV participants) for influenza vaccine. The AWV is associated with significantly higher odds of undergoing [preventive services](#) across the six primary outcomes examined (mammography, 1.63; Pap smear test, 1.86; bone mass measurement, 1.99; prostate cancer screening, 1.83; [colon cancer screening](#), 2.43; and [influenza vaccine](#), 1.46). Findings for the two secondary outcomes also showed

significantly higher odds ratio among people with an AWW (depression, 4.00; alcohol screening, 6.15).

"Promoting [preventive care](#) among the Medicare population is essential to enable the elderly to stay healthy, avoid or delay the onset of disease, and live productive lives," stated co-author Danny R. Hughes, executive director of the Neiman Institute and Georgia Tech professor of economics. "Given recent efforts to trim covered healthcare benefits as a mechanism to control rising costs, it's clear that the annual wellness visit is an important benefit that provides real value to patients, providers, and payers by effectively facilitating preventive care to this population."

Provided by Harvey L. Neiman Health Policy Institute

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