Cervical cancer screening rates dropped during stay-at-home order

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There was a considerable decrease in the cervical cancer screening rate

during the stay-at-home order issued by the governor of California on March 19, 2020, to contain the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, according to research published in the Jan. 29 issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

Maureen J. Miller, M.D., from the CDC in Atlanta, and colleagues examined electronic medical records for about 1.5 million women served by Kaiser Permanente Southern California health care system to assess cervical cancer screening rates before, during, and after the stay-at-home order issued by the governor of California on March 19, 2020.

The researchers observed a substantial decrease in cervical cancer screening rates during the stay-at-home order compared with the 2019 baseline. Cervical cytology screening rates per 100 person-months decreased 78 percent among women aged 21 to 29 years. For women aged 30 to 65 years, there was an 82 percent decrease in human papillomavirus test screening rates per 100 person-months. Screening rates returned to near baseline after the stay-at-home order was lifted, which could have been aided by the organized screening program that included reminder systems and tracking persons lost to follow-up.

"As the pandemic continues, public health interventions to address decreases in cancer screening rates will be critical to avoid increased incidence of advanced cancers because of delayed detection," the authors write.

More information: Abstract/Full Text