

## **The effect of Patient Navigation on no-show rates at a tertiary care colposcopy center**

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*Objective:* Patient navigators have been used successfully to guide vulnerable patients through barriers to cancer care and reduce disparities in cancer outcomes. This study evaluates the effect of a Patient Navigator Program on no-show rates at a tertiary care referral colposcopy center and explores factors associated with missed appointments.

*Materials and methods:* No-show rates prior and subsequent to implementation of the intervention were compared by chi-square test. We compared patient demographic, lifestyle, and diagnostic characteristics between patients who ever and never missed appointments. We describe patient reported barriers to care.

*Results:* Of 4199 women evaluated in our clinic from January 2006 to December 2013, 2441 (58%) had at least one missed appointment. African American, Hispanic and publicly insured women tended to miss appointments more frequently than white and privately insured women ( $p < 0.0001$ ). Patients who missed appointments tended to have more non-normal cytology ( $p < 0.0001$ ), cervical pathology ( $p = 0.007$ ) and vulvar pathology ( $p = 0.001$ ). No-show rates declined from 49.7% to 29.5% after implementation of the patient navigator program ( $p < 0.0001$ ). We found that forty-five percent of patient no-shows were anticipated or a result of patient misunderstanding and could be mediated with targeted education by the patient navigator.

*Conclusions:* Patient Navigator Programs at referral centers reduce no show rates, thus improving patient follow-up, which may reduce disparities in cervical cancer screening and treatment.