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Racial differences in preventive practices of african-american and Hispanic women.

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OBJECTIVES: To compare the use of preventive practices of Hispanic- and African-American women aged 50 and older. DESIGN: A cross-sectional survey. SETTING: Inpatient and outpatient units of a teaching hospital located in South Central Los Angeles. PARTICIPANTS: Convenience sample of 337 women aged 50 and older. MEASUREMENTS: Demographic and lifestyle characteristics and selected preventive practices. Preventive practices reported were self-breast examination, mammography, Papanicolaou (Pap) smear, digital rectal examination and stool occult blood examination, sigmoidoscopy, chemoprophylaxis, and immunization. Information was obtained in a face-to-face interview. RESULTS: African-American women were more likely to have had a Pap smear ever and to have used aspirin prophylaxis than Hispanic women. CONCLUSION: There were no major differences in the use of preventive services by the two ethnic groups except for Pap smear and aspirin use. Immunization and colorectal cancer screening rates were low in African-American and Hispanic women.

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