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## Cancer screening among peer-led community wellness center enrollees

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Growing evidence shows that disparities exist in health services for those with mental disorders served by the public mental health system. This study assessed the use of cancer screening services among New Jersey residents enrolled in publically funded mental health programs. Self-administered surveys were completed by 148 adults who utilize services at peer-led community wellness centers throughout New Jersey. The survey instrument collected data on their use of breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening services as well barriers to receiving such preventative services and their perceptions on their overall health. Schizophrenia spectrum disorders were the most common self-reported psychiatric condition. More males than females participated in the study with African Americans and Whites participating equally. Most participants perceived their overall health as excellent (17%) or good (45%). Screening for colorectal cancers (42%) was low when compared to the general population (57%). Physicians not advising patients to receive cancer screening tests emerged as the main cause of low screening rates. Wellness initiatives designed and initiated by peers, collaborating with other health care providers may improve adherence to cancer screening measures.

### Biography

Lois E Rockson is pursuing her PhD in Urban Systems with a focus in Urban Health in the Joint Doctoral Program at New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rutgers School of Nursing, and Rutgers University, Newark. Her dissertation work focuses on "Cancer screening among immigrants from the Caribbean Basin". She completed her Master's in Public Health at University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's School of Public Health in 2008 and; a Joint Master's in Health Professions Education at Seton Hall University and University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's School of Health Related Professions in 2001. She is an Assistant Professor at Rutgers School of Health Related Professions, Department of Clinical Laboratory Science's. This study was the result of an interdisciplinary collaborative study with Rutgers School of Health Related Professions, Department of Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Counseling Professions.

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