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Sixth Annual Report to Congress on High-Priority Evidence Gaps for Clinical Preventive Services

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The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF or Task Force) has released its “Sixth Annual Report to Congress on High-Priority Evidence Gaps for Clinical Preventive Services.”

In 2016, the USPSTF continued to fulfill its mission of improving the health of all Americans by making evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services such as screening tests, counseling about healthy behaviors, and preventive medications. These recommendations help clinicians and their patients make informed health care decisions.

In this annual report, the USPSTF identified six recent topics for which the current evidence was insufficient for the Task Force to make a recommendation, including autism screening and tobacco smoking cessation with electronic nicotine delivery systems. The USPSTF also identified evidence gaps that prevent it from making recommendations for specific populations or age groups, such as screening for breast cancer in African American women. Future research in these areas can help fill these gaps and would likely result in important new recommendations that will help to improve the health of Americans.

Read the executive summary below or access the full report here.

(See at – <http://www.menshealthnetwork.org/library/USPSTF-Report-to-Congress-2016.pdf>)

Executive Summary

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF or Task Force) is an independent, volunteer panel of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine. The Task Force works to improve the health of all Americans by making evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services and health promotion. The Task Force comprehensively assesses evidence and makes recommendations about the effectiveness of screening tests, counseling about healthful behaviors, and preventive medications for infants, children, adolescents, adults, older adults, and pregnant women.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 charges the USPSTF with providing an annual report to Congress that identifies gaps in the scientific evidence base and recommends priority areas for future research.

In this sixth annual report, the USPSTF has identified six recent topics for which the current evidence was insufficient for the Task Force to make a recommendation. Future research in these areas can help fill these gaps and would likely result in important new recommendations that will help to improve the health of Americans.

Clinical Preventive Services That Deserve Further Research:

1. Screening for Autism Spectrum Disorder in Young Children
2. Screening for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea in Men
3. Tobacco Smoking Cessation (Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems) in Adults
4. Vitamin Supplementation (Nutrients and Multivitamins) to Prevent Cancer and Cardiovascular Disease
5. Aspirin Use to Prevent Cardiovascular Disease and Colorectal Cancer
6. Screening for Skin Cancer in Adults

In the Affordable Care Act, Congress also requested that the USPSTF identify evidence gaps that prevent it from making recommendations for specific populations or age groups. In this report, the USPSTF has highlighted the following three key evidence gaps.

Evidence Gaps Relating to Specific Populations That Deserve Further Research:

1. Screening for Breast Cancer in African American Women
2. Screening for Cervical Cancer in Hispanic and African American Women
3. Screening for Colorectal Cancer in African Americans and American Indians/Alaska Natives

The USPSTF will continue to independently evaluate the evidence on clinical preventive services to empower health care professionals, health care systems, and the American people to make informed decisions about their health and health care.

The USPSTF hopes that identifying evidence gaps and highlighting them as priority areas for research will inspire public and private researchers to collaborate and target their efforts to generate new knowledge and address important health priorities.

Current as of: December 2016

Internet Citation: *Sixth Annual Report to Congress on High-Priority Evidence Gaps for Clinical Preventive Services.* U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. December 2016.