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Cultural Beliefs and Understandings of Cervical Cancer

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Rural Mexican immigrant women in the U.S. are infrequently screened and experience health disparities from cervical cancer. A collaborative study including Dr. John Luque, associate professor of community health behavior and education, Dr. Yelena Tarasenko, assistant professor of health policy and management and epidemiology, and Dr. Moya Alfonso, assistant professor of community health behavior and education, at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University explored cancer-related cultural beliefs among Mexican immigrant women related to screening behaviors.

The findings were published online in the *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* in an article entitled “Cultural Beliefs and Understandings Among Mexican Immigrant Women in Southeast Georgia”.

They administered a cross-sectional survey to 39 Mexican immigrant women due for screening. They also conducted univariate and bivariate analyses of participants’ characteristics, Pap test history, cancer-related knowledge and beliefs, and cultural consensus analysis about causes of cervical cancer and barriers to screening. For all the cultural consensus tasks, there was consensus (Eigenratios > 3:1) among survey participants. Comparing the rankings of risk factor clusters, clusters related to sexual behaviors were ranked more severely than clusters related to genetic or other behavioral factors. There was agreement on ideas of cervical cancer causation and barriers to screening among these women. Hence, improved methods of disseminating important health information and greater access to cervical cancer screening are needed, particularly in relationship to stigma about sex and birth control practices.