

Abstract

US Preventive Task Force Recommendations: Methods and Challenges for Addressing Health Equity, the Example of Breast Cancer Screening

This lecture will provide an overview of the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) beginning with a brief history, followed by a review of the methods used to prioritize screening topics, develop and finalize topic specific research plans, review the randomized clinical trials and observational evidence, integrate public comments, and develop final recommendations. The USPSTF makes evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services, including screening, counseling, and use of preventive medications. Recommendations address only services offered in primary care settings or services referred by a primary care clinician that apply to adults and children with no signs or symptoms of the condition of interest. The lecture will also describe challenges when addressing health equity in all phases of the USPSTF's work and the approach used to identify and communicate critically important evidence gaps to physicians, patients, clinical researchers, community members, and research funders. Examples of the evidence synthesis required for the recently published breast cancer screening recommendation and other recent recommendations will be reviewed. The lecture will conclude with a review of the methods and tools employed to disseminate USPSTF recommendations.