

Saturado: Barriers and facilitators of mammography screening among Costa Rican women

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Background:

Costa Rica has a universal healthcare system. Although women have free access to mammograms through the Caja, little is known about preventive mammography. According to the Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social in 2014, over 13,000 Costa Rican women were waiting for a mammogram.

Objective:

The purpose of this study is to determine what factors, including barriers and facilitators, influence mammography screenings in Costa Rica.

Methods:

Qualitative descriptive design was used for this study. Ten women from Heredia, Costa Rica were interviewed in Spanish using semi structured questions. Interviews were audiotaped, transcribed verbatim, and translated into English. Data were analyzed using content analysis.

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Findings:

Barriers

Wait Times

-“Social security never gives me an appointment. They leave me on the waiting list. ‘We will call you’. And that call never comes.”

Saturado (saturated)

-“We’re saturated, everything is saturated.”
-“It’s too much, too many people.”

Lack of finances

-“The topic of the mammogram is very easy here, in Costa Rica: if you have money, you can get it done quickly, and if you don’t, wait until the Caja wants to do it. Mmm, that’s how it is.”

Facilitators

Patras (connections)

-“...the entire social system of social medicine in the country, moves heavily based on what we call “patras.” That is, of people who are inside. So, if I know someone, they give it to me quickly...But if I don’t know anyone, I could be years without getting one.”

Ability to pay for private clinics

-“...if I didn’t have money, I would have to wait up to two years for a mammogram.”

Conclusion:

Data showed that most (7/10) of the women utilized the private healthcare system to get a mammogram. Although there are benefits to providing universal healthcare, there are some significant barriers for women seeking mammograms in Costa Rica. This study can inform future research about preventive care in Costa Rica.



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