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Cervical Cancer Screening Rates Low Among Asian Women

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Health providers working to reduce the rates of cervical cancer among Asian women say cultural traditions are preventing women from undergoing screenings and seeking treatment for the disease, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reports. Health workers say that many Asian women avoid seeking testing and treatment in part because of the cultural tradition of modesty that teaches them to be uncomfortable exposing their bodies to male gynecologists. Other factors include the possible discomfort of undergoing a Pap test, mistrust of the U.S. health care system, language barriers and limited access to medical treatment. According to the National Cancer Institute, the cervical cancer rate among Vietnamese women is five times the rate among white women, and surveys show Asian women overall have lower cervical cancer testing rates. Currently, the CDC is operating a program in areas with large Asian populations in order to prevent breast and cervical cancers. The program's message is: "If you don't take care of yourself, you can't take care of your family."