

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS USED BY WOMEN INVITED TO A BREAST CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM IN CATALONIA, SPAIN

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Background: The purpose of this study was 1) to describe the preferred communication channels by women to contact the screening program office and 2) to identify sociodemographic characteristics associated with the use of new information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Methods: The study population consisted of 141,684 women aged 50-69 years who were invited to a Catalan Breast Cancer Screening Program in 2015-2016.

Communication channels were classified as 1) new information and communication technologies (ICTs): text message, website service and email and 2) standard communication channels: phone call and face-to-face interaction.

We included age and socioeconomic status as sociodemographic variables. We used an area-based socioeconomic index score. This index has been elaborated by the Catalan Agency for Quality and Health Technology Assessment and it combines several domains (income deprivation, employment deprivation, health deprivation and educational skills), into a single deprivation score for a small area [score: 0-100].

We performed a regression model to identify sociodemographic characteristics associated with the use of ICTs. Odds ratios (OR) and 95% confidence interval (CI) were estimated.

Results: One out of five women invited to breast cancer screening (n=31,852) contacted the screening office. The main reasons to contact the Screening Office were to reschedule (42.4%) and to cancel the appointment (29.2%). Regarding the preferred communication channels, 24.5% (n=7,904) of women contacted through ICTs. Older women and those who lived in most deprived areas were less likely to use ICTs (OR: 0.942; 95%CI: 0.938-0.946; OR: 0.985; 95%CI: 0.984-0.987, respectively).

Conclusions: The use of ICTs is still low among our target population although it will be increasing over time. It is important as a screening office to offer a wide range of communication channels for scheduling and managing appointments.