

Frequency and outcome of cervical cancer prevention failures in the United States.

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Raab SS, Grzybicki DM, Zarbo RJ, et al. Frequency and outcome of cervical cancer prevention failures in the United States. *Am J Clin Pathol.* 2007;128(5):817-24.

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/frequency-and-outcome-cervical-cancer-prevention-failures-united-states>

This AHRQ-funded study of cervical cancer screening results found a remarkably low incidence of missed malignancies. The authors analyzed Papanicolaou test results and the results of subsequent biopsies and found that the results were discordant in only 0.3% of cases, with most of these inconsistencies being clinically insignificant. Delayed diagnosis of cancer is a common cause of [malpractice suits](#) in ambulatory care. Although a [prior study](#) by Raab and colleagues found a higher overall error rate in anatomic pathology cancer diagnosis, this study documents that the US cervical cancer screening system appears to be very effective at preventing squamous cervical cancer. However, a [systematic review](#) of missed or delayed cancer diagnoses found that misdiagnosis of four common types of cancer—melanoma, as well as cancer of the breast, lung, or colon—remains common.