

## **Cancer Prevention and Screening Behaviors of Lesbians**

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The incidence of cancer diagnosis has increased in the United States highlighting the need for astute cancer prevention and screening behaviors. Previous literature has suggested that lesbians use alcohol and tobacco more than heterosexual women and may not follow the American Cancer Society's guidelines regarding screening for cervical cancer. The purpose of this study is to examine the cancer prevention and screening behaviors of lesbians using the American Cancer Society's guidelines related to cancer prevention and screening.

This project is a replication of the 1987 Boston Lesbian Health Project I (BLHP I). The 102-item self-report survey was distributed nationwide using various methods including snowballing sampling techniques. The sample includes self-identified lesbians from 44 states with the greatest representation from Massachusetts, California, Georgia, and Texas.

Results indicate that the majority of participants (n = 808, 71.6%) reported the use of alcohol, 150 (13.3%) indicated that they sometimes have two or more drinks per day and 53 (4.7%) reported drinking that quantity daily. Sixty-nine women (6.9%) indicated that people close to them worried about their drinking behaviors. On the whole, participants in this study did not smoke cigarettes (n = 914, 81.7%). Most women ages 21 – 70 years (n = 801, 72.8%) met the American Cancer Society's guidelines for cervical cancer screening. These and other results will be compared to the American Cancer Society's guidelines for cancer screening. Recommendations for enhanced health promotion and cancer prevention will be presented.