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Preventive check-ups - problems and challenges in the rural areas - experience from the Republic of Serbia

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Background & Aim: Health systems from all over the world are recognizing the importance of investments in preventive check ups.GP must use health resources efficiently and find the right measure between rationality and competency.

Method: Summary of current situation in preventive area of work, in rural practices, with close one on one particular health center, as representative.

Results: Around 82% of Serbia are rural areas and 42% of inhabitants live there.Coverage with primary health clinics defers hugely,depending on the country region (87% North to 20% Southeast). Roughly, 11% of rural population don`t have health insurance. Some 52% of children in rural areas were regularly vaccinated,compared to 62% in urban areas. Percentage of women,aged 40-69,who underwent mammography is 6,8% in rural and 13,2% in urban areas. As Pap tests go,25,6% of women aged 20-69 ,in rural areas did it,compared to 41,8% in urban areas. Health center-Krusevac,(Central Serbia),primary care facility, provides health care for about 130 000 inhabitants and we have around 118 000 registered patients.Primary care physicians-PCPs (there are 62 of them and the third are specialists in general practice) provide health care for all inhabitants from 19 years of age and older. The center has got 8 clinics in the city and 24 rural clinics.PCPs provide around 400 000 curative exams and 15 000 preventive check ups per year.Since 2005. the Center has also got Preventive center and Diabetic advisory clinic,available for all diabetic patients.As a part of Children` clinic there are Advisory clinic for children development and Youth advisory clinic. Preventive services in PC practice mostly include general physical examinations,flu immunization, AT immunization and lately colon cancer screening (Hemoccult test) since 2013.All these preventive services are equally available in rural and in urban areas.

Conclusions: Our suggestions to improve the situation: use every patient`s visit to give proper health advice, try to contact people who are not insured through local authorities (they rarely or never pay visits to doctors), contact local media for support and organize gatherings with locals with topics of interest.