

The Role of Physician Recommendations in Improving CRC Screening Rates: A Brief Review

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Background

- Colorectal Cancer (CRC) is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the US¹
- Cancer screening can detect precancerous polyps or CRC at an early stage²
- NM has the lowest CRC screening rate of any state in the nation³
 - Hispanics are less up-to-date with CRC screening compared to non-Hispanic Whites

Barriers to CRC screening

- Some patient factors may serve as barriers to getting screened for CRC^{4, 5}
 - Lack of motivation
 - Lack of awareness
 - Fear of embarrassment
 - Low education
 - Lack of insurance
- **A physician recommendation significantly increases patient adherence to CRC screening^{6, 7}**
 - But not everyone receives these recommendations

Purpose

- To explore the role of physician recommendations in patient adherence to CRC screening

Methods

- Databases used in lit. review: PubMed, Academic Search Complete, and CINAHL Complete.
- Boolean search terms used:
 - “physician recommendation”
 - “CRC screening”
 - “Hispanic”
- Articles were dated from 2007-2015
- All articles were peer-reviewed.

Findings

- 10 articles identified
- 3 main aspects of physician recommendations:
 - Patterns of physician CRC screening recommendations^{6, 8, 9, 10}
 - Quality of the recommendations^{11, 12, 13}
 - Physician factors in CRC screening recommendations^{14, 15}

Findings: Patterns of physician CRC screening recommendations

- Less likely to receive a CRC screening recommendation^{8, 9, 10}:
 - Females
 - Single individuals
 - Those with low education
 - The uninsured
 - Individuals with a male physician
 - Individuals without a gastrointestinal (GI) diagnosis

Findings:

Quality of CRC recommendations

- Use of 5A steps in a physician CRC screening recommendation¹¹:
 - 93% - Advise (gave a clear recommendation for screening)
 - 56% - Assist (provided support with scheduling logistics)
 - 52% - Assess (discussed eligibility for screening)
 - 15% - Agree (negotiated a course of action with the patient)
 - 3% - Arrange (discussed how patients would receive test results or planned for future discussion of CRC screening)
- Patients were less likely to be screened the fewer steps their physician recommendation included

Findings: Quality of CRC recommendations (cont.)

- Another study explored the elements of informed decision making in CRC screening recommendations¹³
 - 98.5% - discussed the issue of CRC screening
 - 33.8% - discussed patient's role in decision making
 - 16.9% - discussed risks and benefits of CRC screening
 - 6.2% - assessed patient understanding and preferences
- The mean score of completeness for a physician recommendation was 2.35 on a scale of 1-5

Findings: Physician Factors in CRC screening recommendations

- 81% (of physicians) strongly agree colonoscopy is an effective screening test¹⁴
 - 24% strongly agree FOBT is an effective screening test
- Individuals who receive a recommendation for a colonoscopy only are less likely to get screened than those who receive a recommendation for a colonoscopy and an FOBT¹⁵

Findings: Physician Factors in CRC screening recommendations (cont.)

- Physician barriers to discussing CRC screening with patients⁷:
 - Lack of time in appointments
 - Misunderstandings about screening tests' effectiveness
 - Lack of financial incentives

Recommendations: Patterns of physician CRC screening recommendations

- Recommendations for CRC screening should be provided to all eligible patients¹⁰
 - Individuals ages 50-75
 - Earlier if you have a family history of CRC or if you are of African American descent
- Physicians should use friends and family to motivate individuals to get screened^{6, 8, 9, 10}
 - Studies suggest that interpersonal relationships are an effective motivator to get screened

Recommendations: Quality of the Recommendations

- Use of stool tests should be increased in health care practices¹²
 - Less invasive, alternative to colonoscopies
 - More practical (completed at home)
 - Relatively inexpensive
- Physician CRC screening recommendations should be more comprehensive and complete^{11, 13}
 - Not only simply discussing the need for screening, but providing additional support and information

Recommendations: Physician factors in CRC screening recommendations

- Physicians should offer a variety of test choices when providing CRC screening recommendations¹⁵
- Patient preferences should be considered when providing CRC screening recommendations¹⁵
- Patients are more likely to get screened

The Research Process: Selecting A Topic



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The Research Process: Selecting A Topic

- Be open to new research opportunities
- Select a topic you are interested in
- Find supportive mentors who can assist you throughout the research process
 - You can also start working on existing projects if they have any

Benefits of Doing Research



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Benefits of Doing Research

- Learn more about topics that are interesting to you
- Gain public health research experience
- Networking opportunities
- Gain confidence in your work
- Build your resume
- Build references
- Explore possible career opportunities

Questions?



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