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Accuracy of self-reports of fecal occult blood tests and test results among individuals in the carpentry trade.

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BACKGROUND: Inaccuracy in self-reports of colorectal cancer (CRC) screening procedures (e.g., over- or underreporting) may interfere with individuals adhering to appropriate screening intervals, and can blur the true effects of physician recommendations to screen and the effects of interventions designed to promote screening. We assessed accuracy of self-report of having a fecal occult blood test (FOBT) within a 1-year window based on receipt of FOBT kits among individuals aged 50 and older in the carpentry trade (N = 658) who were off-schedule for having had a FOBT. **METHOD:** Indices of evaluating accuracy of self-reports (concordance, specificity, false-positive and false-negative rates) were calculated relative to receipt of a mailed FOBT. Among those who mailed a completed FOBT, we assessed accuracy of reporting the test result. **RESULTS:** Participants underestimated having performed a FOBT (false-negative rate of 44%). Accuracy was unrelated to perceptions of getting or worrying about CRC or family history. Self-reports of having a negative FOBT result more consistently matched the laboratory result (specificity 98%) than having a positive test result (sensitivity 63%). **CONCLUSIONS:** Contrary to other findings, participants under- rather than over reported FOBT screening. Results suggest greater efforts are needed to enhance accurate recall of FOBT screening.