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Relatives of colorectal cancer patients: factors associated with screening behavior.

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**BACKGROUND:** The purpose of this study was to identify whether decisions regarding colorectal cancer (CRC) screening by relatives of CRC patients are influenced by social interactions with family members, friends, and physicians or by public awareness campaigns. **METHODS:** Screened (n=236) and nonscreened (n=132) relatives of CRC patients were interviewed in 2001. A socioecologic model was used as the framework for the interview variables, which included interactions with relatives, medical professionals, and social groups, as well as perceived benefits and barriers to screening and perceived susceptibility. **RESULTS:** Physician encouragement, fewer barriers to screening, strong CRC family history, encouragement from relatives, advice from a surgeon, and discussion of CRC screening with social groups were all associated with ever having been screened. Having been encouraged by a physician was the strongest correlate of screening behavior. Perceived susceptibility to CRC, advice from family members, and exposure to public awareness information were not associated with screening. **CONCLUSIONS:** The socioecologic framework is a good explanatory model of CRC screening in increased-risk relatives, as variables from each level were associated with screening. These findings can guide interventions aimed at increasing screening uptake, particularly those involving physicians.

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