

Cancer. 2004 May 15;100(10):2093-103.

Patterns and predictors of colorectal cancer test use in the adult U.S. population.

Seeff LC, Nadel MR, Klabunde CN, Thompson T, Shapiro JA, Vernon SW, Coates RJ.

Division of Cancer Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia 30341-3717, USA. lvs3@cdc.gov

BACKGROUND: Screening is effective in reducing the incidence and mortality of colorectal cancer. Rates of colorectal cancer test use continue to be low. **METHODS:** The authors analyzed data from the National Health Interview Survey concerning the use of the home-administered fecal occult blood test (FOBT) and sigmoidoscopy/colonoscopy/proctoscopy to estimate current rates of colorectal cancer test use and to identify factors associated with the use or nonuse of tests. **RESULTS:** In 2000, 17.1% of respondents reported undergoing a home FOBT within the past year, 33.9% reported undergoing an endoscopy within the previous 10 years, and 42.5% reported undergoing either test within the recommended time intervals. The use of colorectal cancer tests varied by gender, race, ethnicity, age, education, income, health care coverage, and having a usual source of care. Having seen a physician within the past year had the strongest association with test use. Lack of awareness and lack of physician recommendation were the most commonly reported barriers to undergoing such tests. **CONCLUSIONS:** Less than half of the U.S. population age \geq 50 years underwent colorectal cancer tests within the recommended time intervals. Educational initiatives for patients and providers regarding the importance of colorectal cancer screening, efforts to reduce disparities in test use, and ensuring that all persons have access to routine primary care may help increase screening rates.