

Endoscopic Screening Program in Norway - an update

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Currently, no screening program for colorectal cancer (CRC) for the average-risk population is established in Norway. Results from randomised trials showing an effect of endoscopic CRC screening on CRC morbidity and mortality are wanted before endoscopic population screening is considered.

NORCCAP (NORwegian Colorectal Cancer Prevention) is a large scale randomised controlled trial for flexible sigmoidoscopy screening that has finished screening examinations in 2001. Randomised directly from the population registry, 21,000 inhabitants living in two Norwegian regions have been invited to a single FS, and 50% of those invited were also asked to bring a stool sample for FOBT testing. FS screening proved feasible, with a high 65% compliance rate and the vast majority of screenees generally satisfied. The first interim analysis on CRC morbidity/mortality comparing the screening group with a no-screening control group (100,000 individuals) will be presented in 2007.

Colonoscopy is increasingly considered as a primary CRC screening tool. There is, however, a striking absence of randomised trials on the effect of colonoscopy screening on CRC morbidity and mortality. Therefore, we are currently planning a large-scale randomised controlled trial on colonoscopy screening in Norway, the NORCCAP II study. The NORCCAP II design will largely follow the design of the previous NORCCAP study, but uses colonoscopy instead of FS as screening tool.

The Cancer Registry of Norway and the Norwegian Directorate of Health support launching of the study, and we are currently awaiting decision for funding by the Norwegian government. Once funding is in place, the study will start within 1-2 years.