

The Role of Primary Care Physicians and Reminder Systems in Increasing Colorectal Screening Recommendation [Response to Letter]

This article was published in the following Dove Press journal:
Advances in Medical Education and Practice

Mohamed Mahmoud¹
Jessiya Parambil¹
Mohammed Danjuma¹
Ibrahim Abubeker²
Mostafa Najim¹
Hafedh Ghazouani¹
Dabia Al-Mohanadi¹
Ahmed Al-Mohammed¹
Anand Kartha¹
Mohamed A Yassin³

¹Department of Internal Medicine, Hamad Medical Corporation, Doha, Qatar; ²Internal Medicine, Rochester Regional Health Unit, New York, NY, USA; ³Department of Medical Oncology, National Centre for Cancer Care and Research, Hamad Medical Corporation, Doha, Qatar

Dear editor

Thank you for the recent read and comments on our article “Knowledge, Attitude and, Practice of Physicians Regarding Screening of Colorectal Cancer in Qatar: A Cross-Sectional Survey”; I hope the below response will clarify the queries raised by our colleagues from the UK.

In Qatar, healthcare is provided mainly through two organizations, the Primary Health care Corporation (PHCC) and Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), alongside a small contribution from private health care providers. HMC is the main provider of secondary and tertiary healthcare, managing 12 hospital sites – nine specialist hospitals and three community hospitals – as well as the National Ambulance Service and home and residential care services. The health care system in Qatar is slightly different from the UK and Canadian systems. The Family Medicine Model (FMM) with each person having a named family practitioner is still being established as a part of the Primary Health Care Corporation Corporate Strategic Plan 2019–2023.¹ And many of the patients who are being followed under HMC, continue their medical care there and approaches primary health care for unforeseen situations only. The survey was conducted in three main general hospitals in HMC, which are Hamad General Hospital, Al Wakra Hospital, and Al Khor Hospital.

The cancer screening programs in Qatar are offered only in governmental institutes. Once the physician decides to refer an eligible patient for cancer screening from the above-mentioned hospitals, the patient will be directed to the only specialized cancer center in Qatar named the National Center for Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR), which is again part of HMC or one of the three major PHCCs chosen for cancer screening. Patients can also book direct appointments for cancer screening at the PHCCs, but the awareness of this pathway among the general population is low. It has been established that the knowledge and attitude of the Arab population towards colorectal cancer is poor compared to the western world.^{2,3} Physician recommendation is one of the main factors that has been shown to improve compliance to cancer screening.

Since the launch of the National Cancer Strategy in 2011, the Qatari government has supported cancer screening and the population-based National Screening program was introduced in 2016. The electronic medical record system was modified

Correspondence: Jessiya Parambil
General Internal Medicine, Hamad
General Hospital, Al-Rayyan Road,
P O Box 3050, Doha, Qatar
Tel +974 30007415
Email dr:jessiya.vp@gmail.com

to include pathways for referrals. Unfortunately, the trainees and senior physicians in the tertiary care centers were not instructed or made aware of it, making it mostly unused.

These were the rationale behind conducting the study among the internal medicine physicians and residents.

Regarding the comment about the general practitioner role in colorectal cancer screening in Qatar, unfortunately, we have not included them in the survey, but it provides an opportunity for further study. Lastly, I agree with the commenters that physician-targeted reminder incorporated into our current Electronic health records systems will be a cost effective method to increase uptake and recommendation of cancer screening. Periodic quality improvement audits could follow our survey to ensure the sustainability of physicians' practices. We expect that this study will serve as a baseline to monitor changes over time.

Disclosure

The authors report no conflicts of interest in this communication.

References

1. Corporate Strategy [Internet]; [cited February 4, 2021]. Available from: <https://www.phcc.gov.qa/en/AboutUs/Corporate-Strategy>. Accessed February 15, 2021.
2. Khayyat YM, Ibrahim EM. Public awareness of colon cancer screening among the general population: a study from the Western Region of Saudi Arabia. *Qatar Med J.* 2014;2014(1):3. doi:10.5339/qmj.2014.3
3. Abdouli LA, Dalmook H, Abdo MA, Carrick FR, Rahman MA. Colorectal cancer risk awareness and screening uptake among Adults in the United Arab Emirates. *Asian Pac J Cancer Prev.* 2018;19(8):2343–2349. doi:10.22034/APJCP.2018.19.8.2343

Dove Medical Press encourages responsible, free and frank academic debate. The content of the *Advances in Medical Education and Practice* 'letters to the editor' section does not necessarily represent the views of Dove Medical Press, its officers, agents, employees, related entities or the *Advances in Medical Education and Practice* editors. While all reasonable steps have been taken to confirm the content of each letter, Dove Medical Press accepts no liability in respect of the content of any letter, nor is it responsible for the content and accuracy of any letter to the editor.

Advances in Medical Education and Practice

Dovepress

Publish your work in this journal

Advances in Medical Education and Practice is an international, peer-reviewed, open access journal that aims to present and publish research on Medical Education covering medical, dental, nursing and allied health care professional education. The journal covers undergraduate education, postgraduate training and continuing medical education

including emerging trends and innovative models linking education, research, and health care services. The manuscript management system is completely online and includes a very quick and fair peer-review system. Visit <http://www.dovepress.com/testimonials.php> to read real quotes from published authors.

Submit your manuscript here: <http://www.dovepress.com/advances-in-medical-education-and-practice-journal>