

Motives for not undergoing a colonoscopy after an unfavourable result in the Dutch population-based screening for colorectal cancer: preliminary results of the ARCUS study

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Background: Persons who receive an unfavourable result in the Dutch screening program for colorectal cancer are recommended a colonoscopy. However, in 2015, 10% (n=805) did not undergo a colonoscopy, of whom 8% are estimated to have colorectal cancer and 38% an advanced adenoma. In the ARCUS study (Amsterdam Research on Colonoscopy Uptake after Screening), we investigate motives of screen-positive persons for not undergoing a colonoscopy and compare them with screen-positive persons who did undergo a colonoscopy.

Methods: In-depth interviews are conducted until data saturation is reached, with individuals who did as well as individuals who did not undergo a colonoscopy after an unfavourable screening result. At a later stage, we will quantitatively investigate the prevalence of the found motives.

Preliminary results: We have performed initial interviews with individuals who underwent a colonoscopy within a year after receiving the unfavourable result (participants) and individuals who did not (non-participants); of the non-participants, one did undergo a colonoscopy, but only after a year. The participants differed from the non-participants in three aspects. Firstly, participants had a much higher risk perception of colorectal cancer than non-participants. Secondly, participants were less influenced by their GP in their decision-making than non-participants. Thirdly, when asked to draw cancer in a provided sketch of a colon, participants drew red lumps, whereas non-participants drew brown or black holes. None of the persons who underwent a colonoscopy had colorectal cancer.

Conclusions: Based on our first interviews, risk perception appears to be a defining factor in deciding whether or not to undergo a colonoscopy. Also, the GP may play an important role, especially for individuals with a low risk perception of colorectal cancer. Furthermore, individuals not undergoing a colonoscopy might have a different conceptualization of colorectal cancer than individuals undergoing a colonoscopy.