# Can messages based on behavioral economics increase participation in colorectal cancer screening programmes?

Submission date	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<ul><li>Prospectively registered</li></ul>		
28/05/2021		☐ Protocol		
Registration date	Overall study status Completed	Statistical analysis plan		
17/06/2021		[X] Results		
Last Edited	Condition category	[X] Individual participant data		
12/04/2022	Cancer			

## Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

While colorectal cancer (CRC) screening can detect cancer at an early stage, participation in CRC screening programmes is often below recommended levels. In order to be effective, CRC screening programs high participation. There is therefore an interest in studying possible interventions to achieve high participation. While interventions such as pre-notification letters, tailored reminder letters and telephone contact can increase participation, they are often too costly for the screening programmes. Interventions based on behavioural economics only manipulate the decision setting and are therefore potentially cost-neutral. The aim of this study is to test whether messages derived from behavioral economics can increase participation in the context of the Cypriot pilot program for colorectal cancer screening.

#### Who can participate?

All residents aged 50-69 years who are eligible for colorectal cancer screening.

#### What does the study involve?

In the first study participants are randomly allocated to receive the standard invitation letter with one of six additional behavioral economics-based messages included, or the standard invitation letter with no manipulation. The additional behavioural economics-based messages are built on the following principles: (1) social responsibility to look after own health, (2) anticipated regret of non-attendance, (3) financial opportunity costs of non-attendance, (4) benefit of early detection, (5) limited duration of the offer and (6) social norms. In the second study participants are randomly allocated to receive either the standard invitation letter with the most effective message from the first study, or the standard invitation letter with no manipulation.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

This study presents participants with an invitation for CRC screening. Cancer can often evoke mild anxiety in people. The invitation letter clearly outlined the topic which allowed participants

to decide whether they want to participate in the screening programme. In terms of benefit, the participants will help to test invitation material that will hopefully increase participation rates. This would speed up the diagnostic pathway of CRC as well as have financial implications.

When is the study running? February 2013 to March 2015

Who is funding the study?

- 1. The Ministry of Health (Cyprus)
- 2. European Commission

Who is the main contact? Sandro Stoffel sandro.stoffel@unibas.ch

# **Contact information**

# Type(s)

Scientific

#### Contact name

Dr Sandro Stoffel

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# Additional identifiers

## Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)

Nil known

# ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT)

Nil known

#### Protocol serial number

BET2013CYP

# Study information

#### Scientific Title

Testing messages from behavioral economics to improve participation in the Cypriot colorectal cancer screening program in two field experiments

#### **Study objectives**

Messages derived from behavioral economics can increase participation in colorectal cancer screening.

#### Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

## Ethics approval(s)

Approved 14/9/2013, ethics committee of the Cyprus Ministry of Health (National Bioethics Committee of Cyprus, Laertou 22, 2365 Agios Dometios, Nicosia, Cyprus; +357 (0)22809038 /+357 (0)22809039; cnbc@bioethics.gov.cy), ref: not applicable

### Study design

Two interventional single-blinded randomized controlled trials

#### Primary study design

Interventional

#### Study type(s)

Screening

#### Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Colorectal cancer

#### Interventions

The intervention consists of adding an additional paragraph, containing a message based on behavioural economics, in the invitation letter for colorectal cancer screening.

The researchers perform two randomized controlled trials (RCTs). The first RCT is a seven-arm RCT in which individuals are randomly allocated to receive the standard invitation letter with one of six additional behavioral economics-based messages included, or the standard invitation letter with no manipulation (i.e. control). The additional behavioural economics-based messages are built on the following principles: (1) social responsibility to look after own health, (2) anticipated regret of non-attendance, (3) financial opportunity costs of non-attendance, (4) benefit of early detection, (5) limited duration of the offer and (6) social norms.

The second RCT is a two-arm RCT, in which individuals are randomly allocated to receive either the standard invitation letter with the most efficacious message from the first RCT, or the standard invitation letter with no manipulation (i.e. control). The primary aim of the first RCT is to identify the most efficacious message, which is then tested in the second RCT with more participants per trial arm.

# Intervention Type

Behavioural

#### Primary outcome(s)

Participation (i.e. return of a completed FIT kit) measured 8 weeks after sending out the screening invitation

# Key secondary outcome(s))

# There are no secondary outcome measures

# Completion date

31/03/2015

# **Eligibility**

# Key inclusion criteria

Men and women aged 50 to 69 years

# Participant type(s)

All

# Healthy volunteers allowed

No

#### Age group

Adult

#### Sex

All

#### Total final enrolment

6286

# Key exclusion criteria

Not resident in Cyprus

#### Date of first enrolment

01/10/2013

# Date of final enrolment

31/12/2014

# Locations

# Countries of recruitment

Cyprus

# Study participating centre Ministry of Health

Prodromou 1 Nicosia Cyprus 1148

# Sponsor information

#### Organisation

Joint Research Center

#### **ROR**

https://ror.org/05a4nj078

# Funder(s)

# Funder type

Government

#### **Funder Name**

Ministry of Health (Cyprus)

#### **Funder Name**

**European Commission** 

#### Alternative Name(s)

European Union, Comisión Europea, Europäische Kommission, EU-Kommissionen, Euroopa Komisjoni, EC, EU

### **Funding Body Type**

Government organisation

# Funding Body Subtype

National government

Location

# **Results and Publications**

# Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

Anonymous data will be stored in a repository and made available for all researchers at https://osf.io/wx7je/.

## IPD sharing plan summary

Stored in publicly available repository

# Study outputs

Output type

**Details** 

Results article		28/07/2021	12/04/2022 Yes	No
<u>Dataset</u>	Dartisia ant information shoot		12/04/2022 No	No
Participant information sheet		11/11/2025	11/11/2025 No	Yes