

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

Submission date 28/05/2021	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Registration date 17/06/2021	Overall study status Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited 12/04/2022	Condition category Cancer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

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?
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Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

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Additional identifiers

Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)
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	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article		28/07/2021	12/04/2022	Yes	No
Dataset		30/01/2020	12/04/2022	No	No