Breakfast with the Experts

Population-screening for Colorectal Cancer

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Colorectal cancer (CRC) is one of the leading causes of cancer related death. Colorectal cancer has a long latency period, in which precursors of cancer (adenomas) can be removed by polypectomy. The high incidence of CRC, the high burden of disease, the availability of screening tests and of effective pre-clinical treatment of adenomas and early stage cancers are reasons why population screening for CRC is deemed appropriate.

Several methods for colorectal cancer screening are available. Colonoscopy, in which the entire colon is inspected, is the reference standard for the detection of colorectal neoplasia. Colonoscopy is a burdensome and costly procedure and therefore pre-selection by other tests is considered, selecting individuals with an increased risk for CRC and adenomas. Several options are available, like fecal occult blood tests (guaiac FOBT or immunochemical FOBT), sigmoidoscopy, CT-colonography and also molecular test in blood and stool are currently being developed. Each test has its own test performance characteristics and acceptability profile, which affect the participation and effectiveness success of the associated screening programs.

During this session we will discuss the several screening options for CRC in detail.