

Closing the Gap: A Tale of Enhanced Mailers and Colorectal Cancer Screening

A new strategy to increase screening compliance

March 8, 2024 By [Colon Cancer Foundation](#)

Once upon a time, in a community served by a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) clinic, a group of researchers embarked on a mission to enhance colorectal cancer (CRC) screening among a unique demographic—those aged 45 to 49. Using the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force [screening recommendations](#) as their guiding light, the researchers started their journey of measuring the impact of a mailed fecal immunochemical test (FIT) intervention.

The journey began in February 2022 when 316 eligible individuals in this age group received a mysterious package in the mail—a FIT, the key to unlocking early detection of CRC. This diverse group included 57% females, 58% non-Hispanic Blacks, and 50% commercially insured individuals. The researchers eagerly awaited the outcome of their intervention.

A Surprise Finding

The randomized trial discovered the difference between an improved mailing envelope and a plain one. The enhanced envelope, with a tracking label and a splash of colored messaging stickers, aimed to captivate the recipients.

As the days unfolded, the results emerged. A total of 54 out of 316 individuals (17.1%) observed the call, completing the FIT within 60 days. The enhanced envelope wielded a stronger enchantment, with 21.5% of recipients returning the test, compared to 12.7% from the plain envelope group—a significant difference of 8.9%. The researchers extended their gaze to the entire clinic population in the 45-49 age group, observing the collective transformation in CRC screening over the span of six months. The clinic-level screening soared, rising by a remarkable 16.6%, from a baseline of 26.7% to a triumphant 43.3%.

A New Strategy to Increase Screening Compliance

As the researchers concluded their quest, they discovered a promising path forward. The mailed

FIT intervention had cast a spell of increased CRC screening among the vibrant 45-49-year-old FQHC patients. They recognized that this was just the beginning of the story. Larger studies would be needed to unravel the mysteries of acceptability and completion rates in this younger population.

The story of enhanced mailers and CRC screening echoed through the halls of healthcare, reminding all that visually appealing enchantments can indeed pave the way for a healthier tomorrow.

This blog was published by the [Colon Cancer Foundation](#) on February 20, 2024. It is republished with permission.

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