



SMARTERscreen



GENERAL PRACTITIONER
PLAIN LANGUAGE INFORMATION STATEMENT

A randomised controlled trial of patient SMS messaging in general practice to increase participation in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program

THE RESEARCH TEAM



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Research



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WHY DO WE NEED TO DO THIS RESEARCH?

Australia has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world (1). In 40% of colorectal cancer cases, diagnoses are made in the later stages leading to a poorer prognosis and outcome (2). The Australian National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP) is designed to detect treatable precancerous and early-stage colorectal cancer (3). Currently the uptake of the NBCSP is 44% (4), and even lower (34%) among those aged between 50 and 54 years old (4). Increasing participation in the NBCSP has the potential to significantly reduce morbidity and mortality and reduce health service costs (5).

The NBCSP test is an immunochemical faecal occult blood test (iFOBT) that is safe and highly effective at detecting pre cancerous polyps (6).

(1) IARC 2010; (2) AIHW 2022; (3) NBCSP, Australian Government Dept of Health and Aged Care; (4) AIHW 2021; (5) Lew et al 2018; (6) Hardcastle et al The Lancet 1996.

WHAT IS THE AIM OF SMARTERSCREEN?

SMARTERscreen will measure the impact of sending an SMS, or an SMS with instructional and information videos, on general practice patients' uptake of the NBCSP.

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

If your general practice consents to participate in SMARTERscreen, your clinic will be randomised into one of the three research groups:

Group one: is the control group which will mean practice as usual;

Group two: an SMS will be sent from this practice to patients between two and four weeks before they are due to receive their National Bowel Cancer Screening Kit. The SMS will encourage patients to do the kit;

Group three: an SMS with additional health promotional videos will be sent from this practice to patients between two and four weeks before they are due to receive their National Bowel Cancer Screening Kit. The SMS will encourage them to do the kit and the videos will be motivational and instructional.

We ask you to agree to download the National Cancer Screening Register (NCSR) Health Provider Portal if you do not have it, and allow the research team to work with a designated staff member to generate lists of eligible patients aged between 49 and 60 years old - to ensure we capture all patients about to turn 50. A researcher, with the designated staff member, will access the date kits are due and when they have been returned directly from the NCSR using an encrypted and secure method.

CONTACTS

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ETHICS

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research you can contact the Research Integrity Administrator, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. All complaints are treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the the research and / or Ethics ID number of the research project (Ethics ID: 25313).
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WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED?

We are inviting eligible general practices in Queensland and Victoria to be involved in SMARTERscreen. If your practice uses Best Practice or Medical Director you may be eligible to be involved in this study. We are only including practices not in a 'hot zone' designated by the NBCSP.

WHAT IMPACT WILL THE TRIAL HAVE ON MY PRACTICE?

We anticipate there will be no impact on clinical staff. The research team will work with a designated staff member to generate lists of patients between 49 and 60 who are due to receive their NBCSP kit. The research staff will then add the date the kit is due and when (if) it has been returned directly from the NCSR.

WILL MY PATIENT DATA REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL?

All data related to SMARTERscreen will remain strictly confidential including details about your practice. Only de-identified data about your patients will be used in the research results. To reduce the impact on the practice, the research team will work with one designated administrative staff member to download eligible patient lists and add the date that their kit is due (at the beginning of the study) and date their kit is returned (at the end of the study). The research staff will be trained and supervised by the research team who have decades of experience conducting research in general practice. They will also be required to sign a confidentiality agreement to ensure they comply with the Privacy Act.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS & RISKS OF PARTICIPATION?

The risk of participating in the study is minimal for your practice. The benefits are that your patients by encouraging them to complete the NBCSP kit. As added protection, we will not send an SMS to people who have opted out from receiving SMS from your practice, and patients can opt-out from receiving the SMARTERscreen SMS.

To minimise any impact on the administrative staff we will provide one-on-one training and ongoing support to help load the NCSR Health Provider Portal and download the patient data.

We will reimburse your practice \$1000 to cover the time associated with research activities.

Your participation in this research trial is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. All unprocessed data will be removed from the dataset.

THE NATIONAL CANCER SCREENING REGISTER

The National Cancer Screening Registry Health Provider Portal allows clinicians to easily view and manage their patients' screening status and order replacement NBCSP kits if necessary.