

Population Screening Act: study into personalised colorectal cancer screening

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Executive summary

Health Council of the Netherlands



Erasmus MC has applied for a permit to conduct a scientific study into the effectiveness of personalised screening for colorectal cancer. At the request of the State Secretary of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Health Council's Committee for Population Screening assessed the permit application and tested it against the criteria laid down in the Population Screening Act (*Wet op het bevolkingsonderzoek*, WBO).

Since 2014, the Netherlands has had a population screening programme for colorectal cancer in which people aged 55 to 75 years receive an invitation to be screened every two years. The screening involves an examination of the faeces for traces of blood (haemoglobin), as this could be an indication of (an early stage of) colorectal cancer.

The scientific study aims to improve the yield and effectiveness of the colorectal cancer screening programme by using a personalised screening interval based on faecal haemoglobin concentration in the previous screening round.

Participants with a relatively high risk of developing colorectal cancer receive a new invitation for screening after one year, those with a relatively low risk after two years and participants with a very low risk after three years.

The Committee has established that the study is of sound scientific quality and does not involve any major risks for the participants. The study also complies with the rules for medical practice. For these reasons, the Committee has advised the state secretary to grant the permit.



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