

Population Screening Act: Screening for Barrett's oesophagus

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Executive summary

Health Council of the Netherlands



Radboudumc has applied for a permit to conduct a study into screening for Barrett's oesophagus in patients with chronic reflux symptoms. Barrett's oesophagus, a change of the normal squamous epithelium of the distal oesophagus to columnar-lined intestinal metaplasia, is considered to be a precursor to oesophageal cancer. At the request of the State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport, the Health Council of the Netherlands' Committee on Population Screening examined whether the permit application complies with the requirements of the Population Screening Act (Wet op het bevolkingsonderzoek or WBO).

The Committee has concluded that the proposed screening programme does not qualify as population screening, as defined in the WBO. This is because the participants have a medical indication to undergo the screening test. Accordingly, the Committee advises the State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport to discard the permit application and to refer the applicant to a medical ethics review committee (MERC) for permission to carry out the study.



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