

# Population Screening Act (WBO): pilot population screening for lung cancer

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## Executive summary

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Health Council of the Netherlands



The Erasmus Medical Centre in Rotterdam has applied for a permit for the 4-IN-THE-LUNG-RUN study, a pilot population screening study looking at lung cancer. On request from the State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS), the Population Screening Committee of the Health Council of the Netherlands has examined whether the permit application complies with the requirements of the Population Screening Act.

There is no population screening for lung cancer in the Netherlands. The research question is about the outcomes of annual or biennial screening if such population screening were to be introduced among heavy smokers. The Committee finds that the proposed research is sufficiently scientifically valid and that the risk-benefit ratio is acceptable. There is no personalised or detailed recruitment, so the study will not be able to make any statement

about that. The Committee advises the State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport to grant the permit, subject to a number of conditions. The information for participants and the consent procedure need to be modified. Findings other than lung cancer need to be avoided as much as possible. The applicant may examine calcium score and lung ventilation data, with the consent of the participants, but without feedback of the results to the participant and the general practitioner (GP). No additional ionising radiation may be used for these secondary examinations.



The Health Council of the Netherlands, established in 1902, is an independent scientific advisory body. Its remit is “to advise the government and Parliament on the current level of knowledge with respect to public health issues and health (services) research...” (Section 22, Health Act).

The Health Council receives most requests for advice from the Ministers of Health, Welfare and Sport, Infrastructure and Water Management, Social Affairs and Employment, and Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. The Council can publish advisory reports on its own initiative. It usually does this in order to ask attention for developments or trends that are thought to be relevant to government policy.

Most Health Council reports are prepared by multidisciplinary committees of Dutch or, sometimes, foreign experts, appointed in a personal capacity. The reports are available to the public.

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