

Bowel cancer rates fall among rich men only

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(Medical Xpress) -- Men living in deprived areas now suffer from higher levels of bowel cancer than those from more affluent areas Glasgow academics have found.

Research in the current edition of the [British Journal of Cancer](#) shows that bowel cancer rates are falling among men from the most affluent areas in the West of Scotland but have remained steady among the deprived and in women.

According to Mr Raymond Oliphant, a Clinical Research Fellow in the University's West of Scotland Cancer Surveillance Unit, there is a large and widening gap in bowel cancer between rich and poor men.

Mr Oliphant, a surgeon at the Golden Jubilee hospital, worked alongside Dr David Morrison, Senior Lecturer in Public Health and David Bruster of the Scottish Cancer Registry.

The academics found that between 2005 and 2007, in the most affluent areas of the West of Scotland, 57 in every 100,000 men were diagnosed with bowel cancer compared to 69 in every 100,000 in the most [deprived areas](#); a difference of almost 20 per cent.

It is estimated that if all men were as healthy as those from the most affluent areas, 75 cases of bowel cancer could be prevented every year in the West of Scotland alone.

Mr Oliphant said: "The fall in bowel cancer among certain groups may

indicate that where people are making changes to their lifestyle - losing weight, taking more exercise, and eating more healthily - it really does cut their risk of developing bowel cancer.”

It is feared however that the difference in male bowel [cancer rates](#) between the rich and poor may also be set to increase.

West of Scotland Cancer Surveillance Unit (WoSCSU) is a part of the Institute of Public Health at the University. It specialises in analysing large datasets on cancer incidence and clinical outcomes.

The Scottish Bowel Screening Programme was introduced in 2007 with the aim of detecting bowel cancer at an early stage, even as a pre-cancerous polyp. However, men from the most deprived areas are the least likely group to participate in bowel cancer screening.

“In addition to higher rates of [bowel cancer](#), lower awareness of the benefits of screening among men from the most deprived areas may lead to widening health inequalities in years to come when the full benefits of the national screening programme are seen,” added Mr Oliphant.

“Therefore it is vital that [men](#) from all areas who are invited to take part in the bowel screening programme do so.”

More information:

- Bowel cancer is the third commonest cancer in both men and women in Scotland
- Bowel cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in Europe
- More than 3,700 bowel cancers are diagnosed every year in Scotland
- Bowel cancer accounts for around 13 per cent of all cancers diagnosed in Scotland

- If caught early, more than 90 per cent of people will be alive 5-years after treatment
- On average, only 55 per cent of people will still be alive 5-years after treatment

Provided by University of Glasgow

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