

Bowel screening helps to detect early cancers before they become deadly, study finds

November 5 2012



(Medical Xpress)—Bowel screening is detecting more cancers when they are less mature and have less aggressive biological characteristics according to new research presented at the NCRI Cancer Conference in Liverpool this week.

The research shows that screening is not only able to pick up more early stage bowel cancer but also that more [patients](#) whose cancer is picked up via screening were found to have fewer of the characteristics which make it more likely to have spread. This includes when the tumour grows into [blood vessels](#) in the patients tissue surrounding the [tumour](#), making it more likely to go on to spread.

Doctors from the University of Glasgow examined 394 bowel [cancer patients](#) in Scotland, 288 whose cancer was diagnosed through screening compared with 106 whose cancer was not detected through screening.

They found that patients diagnosed through screening were more likely to be younger, have earlier stage disease, were less likely to be anaemic and were less likely to have the biological characteristics that give tumours the power to spread.

In particular, patients were also less likely to have high levels of [inflammation](#) in their blood (modified Glasgow Prognostic Score). A raised modified Glasgow Prognostic Score is a feature that has recently been shown to predict poorer outcome following a [diagnosis](#) of bowel cancer.

Dr David Mansouri, study author and Clinical Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow, said: "Our new study tells us that as well as the bowel cancers being picked up through screening being less likely to have spread by the time they are diagnosed, there were also more patients with features that may increase the chances of survival. It adds to what we already know about the benefits of bowel screening and shows there may well be other advantages to [screening](#). The next step will be to repeat our work with a larger number of patients."

Dr Jane Cope, director of the NCRI, said: "Deaths from bowel cancer are still very high in the UK – more than 16,000 a year – and only around half of patients survive their disease for more than ten years. But we also know that when bowel cancer is found at the earliest stage, there is an excellent chance of survival and more than 90 per cent of people survive at least five years. So early diagnosis is crucial, and it's important we find out as much we can about the disease so that more lives can be saved."

[Bowel cancer](#) is the third most common cancer with more than 41,000 people diagnosed with the disease each year.

More information: [www.ncri.org.uk/ncriconference ...s/abstracts/A19.html](http://www.ncri.org.uk/ncriconference...s/abstracts/A19.html)

Provided by Cancer Research UK

Citation: Bowel screening helps to detect early cancers before they become deadly, study finds (2012, November 5) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-11-bowel-screening-early-cancers-deadly.html>

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