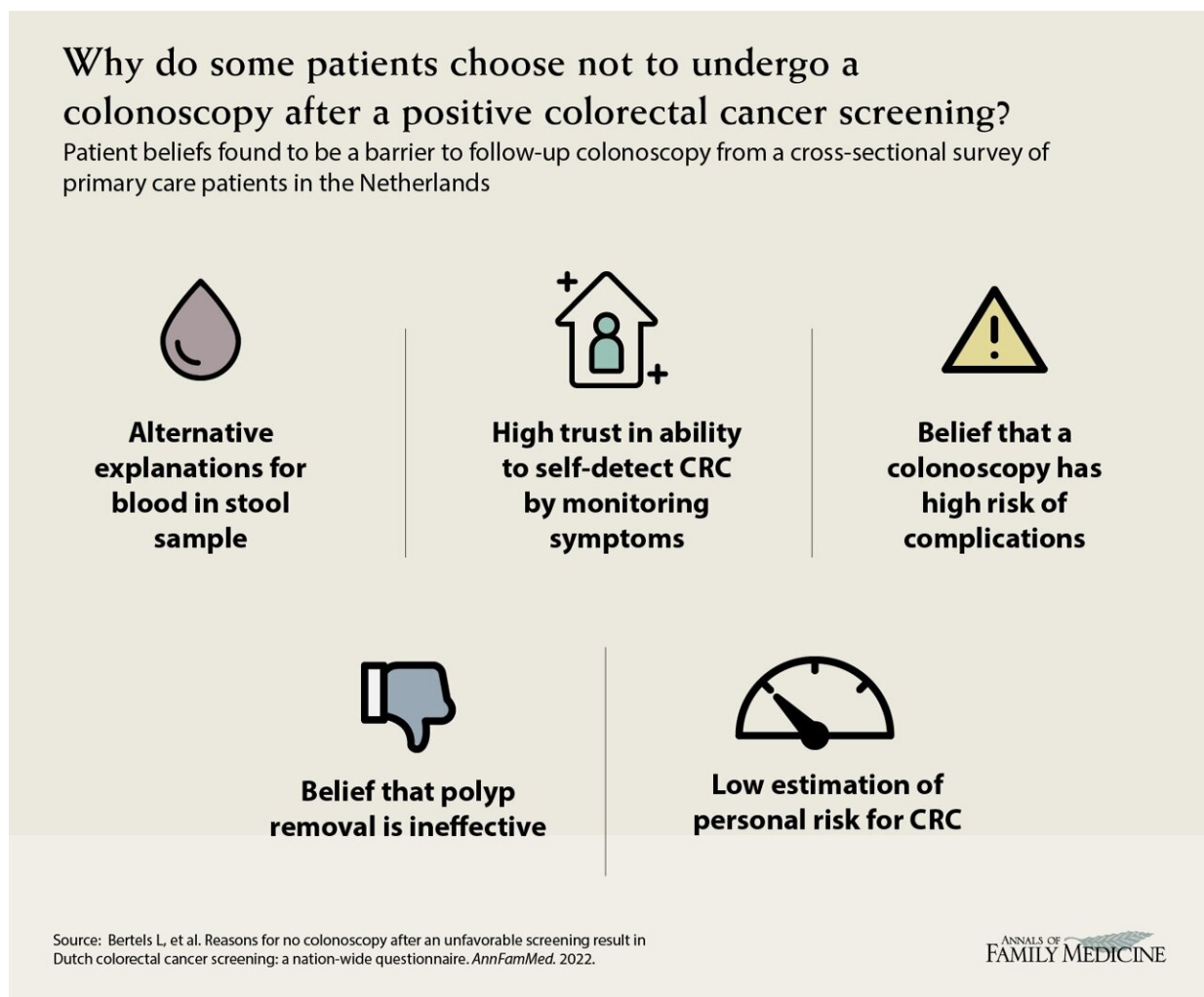







# Researchers explore why patients don't follow up with their doctors after receiving a positive colorectal cancer test

November 29 2022

**Why do some patients choose not to undergo a colonoscopy after a positive colorectal cancer screening?**  
Patient beliefs found to be a barrier to follow-up colonoscopy from a cross-sectional survey of primary care patients in the Netherlands



- **Alternative explanations for blood in stool sample**
- **High trust in ability to self-detect CRC by monitoring symptoms**
- **Belief that a colonoscopy has high risk of complications**
- **Belief that polyp removal is ineffective**
- **Low estimation of personal risk for CRC**

Source: Bertels L, et al. Reasons for no colonoscopy after an unfavorable screening result in Dutch colorectal cancer screening: a nation-wide questionnaire. *AnnFamMed*. 2022.

ANNALS OF FAMILY MEDICINE

Reasons for no colonoscopy after an unfavorable screening result in Dutch colorectal cancer screening: a nation-wide questionnaire. Credit: *The Annals of*

*Family Medicine* (2022). DOI: 10.1370/afm.2871

While screening by Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) can detect colorectal cancers early, successful treatment depends on the patient undergoing follow-up colonoscopy after an unfavorable test result.

A paper published by Dutch researchers examines the reasons why some people do not follow up after a positive at-home test. The researchers argue that understanding the reasons people do not follow up with their doctors has global implications for all people at risk of the cancer as it is best treated early.

Reasons for lack of follow-up include concerns about having a colonoscopy; lack of opportunity to discuss next steps with a medical provider; assumptions and perceptions about their personal risk; a belief that the test result is not indicative of cancer; and questioned effectiveness of polyp removal, as well as poor overall health behaviors.

The strongest positive association with follow-up was the patient's belief that their [family physician](#) would support colonoscopy, as well as fear of cancer. Researchers suggest that personalized screening counseling may help, as well as the involvement of family practitioners.

The research was published in *The Annals of Family Medicine*.

**More information:** Lucinda S. Bertels et al, Reasons for no colonoscopy after an unfavorable screening result in Dutch colorectal cancer screening: A nationwide questionnaire, *The Annals of Family Medicine* (2022). [DOI: 10.1370/afm.2871](https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2871)

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