

School of Public Health Seminar

Presented by the Screening & Test Evaluation Program (STEP)

TOPIC: Do bowel symptoms predict colorectal cancer?

SPEAKER: Dr Barbara-Ann Adelstein
Screening & Test Evaluation Program

DATE: Wednesday, 18 February 2009
TIME: 4:30-5:30 pm
VENUE: Marjorie Oldfield Lecture Theatre
Edward Ford Building
University of Sydney

ABSTRACT

Bowel symptoms such as rectal bleeding, abdominal pain, change in bowel habit, urgency, anaemia, weight loss, or fatigue are often the indications for colonoscopy to exclude colorectal cancer. There is no strong evidence for this practice. I present results from the CRISP (Colonoscopy Research in Symptom Prediction) Study, a primary prospective study that evaluated the relevance of symptoms in over 8,000 patients undergoing colonoscopy in Sydney, Bowral and the Central Coast. My results confirm that even though some symptoms may predict colorectal cancer, this association is weak. For some specific patient groups with symptoms, the risks for colorectal cancer increase. However, risks associated with symptoms, even in these groups, needs to be assessed in the context of other readily available tests to predict the disease, and of other demographic information. Nevertheless, taking into consideration patient age, gender, bowel-related medical history and specific symptoms, the area under the ROC curve is 0.85 which shows that some symptoms assessed in combination with other factors may be useful in discriminating between those patients with cancer and those without.

To view upcoming seminars, go to
<http://www.health.usyd.edu.au/step/seminars/index.php>