



Analyzing Colorectal Cancer Techniques, Screening and Prevention

Takima Yasujio*

Department of Colorectal Surgery, National Cancer Center Hospital, Tokyo, Japan

*Corresponding Author: Takima Yasujio, Department of Colorectal Surgery, National Cancer Center Hospital, Tokyo, Japan; E-mail: takima_yasujio@nccch21.jp

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Description

Colorectal cancer is a significant public health concern, being one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths worldwide. Despite its high mortality rate, it is preventable and treatable if detected early. It explores the techniques used to analyze colorectal cancer the importance of screening, and preventive strategies. Colorectal cancer originates in the colon or rectum, part of the digestive tract. It typically starts as benign polyps that can develop into malignant tumors over time. Risk factors include age, family history, certain genetic mutations, lifestyle factors (such as diet and physical inactivity), and inflammatory bowel diseases.

Histopathology involves the microscopic examination of tissue samples to identify cancerous cells. This standard technique provides definitive diagnoses and helps determine the cancer's stage and grade. Molecular testing identifies genetic mutations and biomarkers associated with cancer. Techniques like Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) and Next-Generation Sequencing (NGS) detect mutations in genes such as *APC*, *KRAS*, and *p53*. These tests guide personalized treatment plans and predict disease prognosis. Imaging plays a vital role in diagnosing and staging colorectal cancer. Colonoscopy a flexible tube with a camera is inserted into the rectum to visualize the colon and rectum. It allows for biopsy and polyp removal.

Computed Tomography (CT) colonography also known as virtual colonoscopy, this non-invasive imaging technique provides detailed pictures of the colon and rectum. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) provides high-resolution images, particularly useful for evaluating rectal cancer. Blood tests, such as the Carcinoembryonic Antigen (CEA) test, measure tumor markers associated with cancer. While not definitive for diagnosis, elevated CEA levels can indicate the presence of cancer and monitor treatment response. Early detection through

screening significantly improves cancer outcomes. Screening helps identify precancerous polyps and early-stage cancers, which are more treatable.

Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) detects hidden blood in the stool, a potential sign of colorectal cancer. There are two types guaiac-based FOBT (gFOBT) and Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT). FIT is preferred due to higher sensitivity and specificity. Stool DNA Test this test detects DNA mutations and blood in stool samples. It is more sensitive than FOBT and FIT but may require follow-up colonoscopy if positive. Flexible Sigmoidoscopy similar to a colonoscopy, this procedure examines the rectum and lower colon. While less comprehensive, it is less invasive and does not require full bowel preparation. Colonoscopy remains the most comprehensive screening method. It allows for visualization of the entire colon and rectum, biopsy, and polyp removal. It is recommended every 10 years for average-risk individuals starting at age 45.

Preventing colorectal cancer involves a combination of lifestyle modifications, chemoprevention, and surveillance for high-risk individuals. A diet high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low in red and processed meats can reduce CRC risk. Fiber intake promotes healthy bowel movements, and antioxidants help protect against cancer development. Regular physical activity lowers cancer risk by maintaining healthy body weight, improving immune function, and reducing inflammation. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week. Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption are linked to higher cancer risk. Quitting smoking and moderating alcohol intake can significantly reduce this risk.

Adhering to recommended screening guidelines is important for early detection and prevention. High-risk individuals, such as those with a family history of colorectal cancer or genetic predispositions, may need earlier and more frequent screenings. Certain medications, such as aspirin and Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), have shown potential in reducing this cancer risk. However, these should be taken under medical supervision due to potential side effects.

Conclusion

Colorectal cancer remains a major health challenge, but with advancements in diagnostic techniques, effective screening programs, and preventive strategies, its impact can be significantly reduced. Awareness and education about this cancer, coupled with proactive health measures, are vital in combating this disease. Regular screening, healthy lifestyle choices, and understanding individual risk factors are key components in the fight against colorectal cancer. By embracing these strategies, one can move towards a future with lower cancer incidence and mortality, ultimately improving public health outcomes.

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