The barriers to colorectal cancer screening tests among adults attending Seremban health clinic in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the second most common cancer in Malaysia, with most cases diagnosed at late stages, leading to poor survival. Stool-based screening methods, like the immunological faecal occult blood test (iFOBT), can reduce CRC mortality, but national uptake remains below 3%. This study explores barriers to CRC screening and their association with sociodemographic factors among adults aged 50 and above attending Seremban Health Clinic. **Materials and Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted in March 2025 at Seremban Health Clinic, Negeri Sembilan, involving adults aged 50 and above. Participants were selected through simple random sampling and completed a self-administered questionnaire adapted from the Scottish Bowel Screening Programme. The tool assessed sociodemographic data, barriers, and facilitators to CRC screening. Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS version 28.0, with statistical methods including t-tests, ANOVA, Chi-square, and Spearman's correlation ($p<0.05$). **Results:** Psychological and informational barriers, such as fear, low confidence, and lack of knowledge, were more prominent than logistical ones. These barriers varied with sociodemographic factors: younger, working individuals cited time constraints; older participants expressed fatalism; those with lower education or unemployed faced greater emotional and practical challenges. Facilitators included belief in early detection, a sense of health responsibility, and encouragement from healthcare providers and family. Prior screening experience was linked to fewer barriers. **Conclusion:** Psychological and information barriers significantly hinder CRC screening uptake. Public health strategies should focus on increasing awareness, correcting misconceptions, and adopting community-based approaches to improve participation and reduce the CRC burden.

Keywords: Barriers to healthcare, colorectal neoplasms, health knowledge, early detection of cancer (mass screening)