Special report: fecal DNA analysis for colon cancer screening

BlueCross BlueShield Association

Citation

Authors' objectives
This Special Report will provide information relevant to the evaluation of fecal DNA screening for colon cancer in asymptomatic patients at average risk. This report will summarize: 1. the current context of existing and emerging screening tests for colorectal cancer, including current published recommendations; 2. the molecular basis for fecal DNA screening and the commercially available fecal DNA screening test, PreGen-Plus; 3. direct and indirect evidence comparing the performance of PreGen-Plus to other methods of colon cancer screening; 4. evidence regarding the likelihood of compliance with fecal DNA screening; and 5. available cost-effectiveness analyses of fecal DNA screening.

Authors' conclusions
Fecal DNA testing is a noninvasive colorectal cancer screening technology that may eventually offer sensitivity for cancer closer to that of colonoscopy than that of conventional, guaiac-based FOBTs. Although the impact of fecal DNA screening on cancer morbidity and mortality has not yet been studied, it seems reasonable to assume that attaining sensitivities equal to or better than that of FOBT would result in similar or improved outcomes. However, several questions remain before fecal DNA screening can be widely recommended: - Can sensitivity for large adenoma be significantly increased compared to FOBT? - Can false-positive rates be maintained appropriately low for a screening program? - What is the final configuration of the PreGen-Plus test and what are its published performance characteristics in an average-risk screening population? - What is the optimal screening interval? - Which patients should not be screened with fecal DNA testing? - Does the test improve compliance with colorectal cancer screening? - Is the test cost-effective?

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