More Canadians Getting Screened For Colon Cancer

Contributed by Ipsos
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But Majority (53%) Believes People only Screened for Cancer after Experiencing Symptoms

Half of Canadians aged 50 to 74 have been screened for colon cancer in the last two years (a fecal occult blood test and colonoscopy/sigmoidoscopy), an increase of 6 points since data collected in similar survey in 2009, according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and its National Colorectal Cancer Screening Network.

Most (92%) Canadians correctly know that cancer screening is a medical test that is performed to detect cancer. However, a majority (53%) believes that individuals are first screened for cancer after they experience symptoms, rather than when they are well before experiencing any symptoms (42%). Interestingly, men (58%) are more likely than women (49%) to believe that screening occurs after symptom development.

While more Canadians are up to date on their colorectal cancer screening, the self-reported incidence of screening is still significantly lower than with other types of cancer screening. In fact, eight in ten (77%) women aged 50 to 74 report having a mammogram performed by a doctor or healthcare professional in the last two years, significantly higher than the proportion of those polled who have been screened for colorectal cancer.

It appears that the issue of colorectal cancer testing is on the minds of many Canadians aged 50 to 74, as four in ten (39%) have had a discussion with a family member about getting tested and three in ten (30%) have discussed the issue with a friend. Nearly one half (48%) of Canadians have discussed getting tested for colorectal cancer with their doctor. Among those who did have a discussion with their doctor, nearly nine in ten (87%) report that their doctor recommended proceeding with the screening.

The Colon Cancer Screening in Canada 2011 survey was conducted from September 8 to 27th, 2011 by Ipsos Reid. The study surveyed 4,050 Canadians aged 45 to 74, with 3,001 interviews conducted by telephone using random digit dialing, and 1,049 recruited via Ipsos Reidâ€™s online panel. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100 per cent response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-1.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of Canadian adults 45-74 been polled.

The sample was stratified by region, with quotas set by gender and age to achieve a representative sample of Canadians 45 to 74 within each province/territory. The data were weighted to ensure that the sample's regional and age/sex/education composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.

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