

## Publication

Utilization of colonoscopy and colonoscopic findings among individuals aged 40-54 years with a positive family history of colorectal cancer: a cross-sectional study in general practice

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**Author(s)** Plath, Jasper; Siebenhofer, Andrea; Haug, Ulrike; Koné, Insa; Hechtner, Marlene; Blumenstein, Irina; Schulz-Rothe, Sylvia; Gerlach, Ferdinand M.; Guethlin, Corina

**Author(s) at UniBasel** [Koné, Insa](#) ;

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Guidelines recommend early colonoscopy for individuals with a positive family history of colorectal cancer (CRC), but little is known about the utilization of colonoscopy and the frequency of colorectal neoplasms among younger affected individuals in Germany. The aim of this study was to determine the utilization of colonoscopy and the frequency of colorectal neoplasms in this risk group. We conducted a cross-sectional study in a general practice setting. Patients aged 40-54 years with at least one first-degree relative with CRC were identified, counseled on their increased risk, and referred to colonoscopy if they decided to undergo this procedure. We assessed the reported utilization of colonoscopy before study participation with a questionnaire and obtained results of colonoscopies performed during the study period from colonoscopy reports. Out of 484 patients with a positive family history of CRC, 191 (39.5%) fulfilled the inclusion criteria and participated in the study: 54% reported that at least one colonoscopy had been performed before study participation. Out of 191 participants, 86 (45%) underwent a colonoscopy during study period. No CRC was found, but 16.3% had any adenoma, and 7.0% had advanced adenomas. Overall, 155 (82%) study participants underwent a colonoscopy either before or during the study period. The utilization of colonoscopies among participants was remarkably high even before study participation. This rate increased up to 82% after counseling by general practitioners. A relevant number of participants had (advanced) adenomas. It appears worthwhile to involve general practitioners in identifying and counseling younger individuals with familial risk for CRC.

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