

Colorectal screening: addressing the growing concern in PakistanNayab Zahid¹, Areeba Tanveer²

Dear Madam, Colorectal carcinoma is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer-related mortality worldwide. Surprisingly, Asia records the highest incidence and mortality rates.¹ Established risk factors include obesity, smoking, a sedentary lifestyle, and frequent antibiotic use.

Whilst screening programmes have been launched globally for early detection, a concerning trend has emerged. There is a noticeable decline in older patients, accompanied by an alarming rise in the disease among adolescents and young adults.² This situation warrants urgent attention at a national level. However, an extensive search on PubMed and Pakmednet revealed no national screening programmes. The country's high prevalence of CRC is attributable to late diagnosis and inadequate screening management. There is an urgent need to raise awareness about the disease and establish nationwide, cost-effective screening programmes for the general population.

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Targetted prevention and early detection programmes could help reverse the trend, as observed in developed countries, where mortality rates have decreased due to effective screening and improved treatment.³

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NZ: Concept, drafting, final approval and agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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