SLOVENIA – POPULATION BASED
COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAMME

HOW TO MAKE
A LONG-TERM EFFORT SUSTAINABLE

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COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING IN SLOVENIA

• Nationally organized, centrally managed, population-based CRC screening programme.

• **Target population covers all residents aged 50-74 with compulsory health insurance.** They are invited every two years. Up to 2015 population aged 50-69 was included.

• **National implementation:**
  – Programme proposal was endorsed by Ministry of Health - Health Council in 2006
  – pilot phase in 2008 with the aim of examine all steps of the programme algorithm in practice,
  – at the national level, the programme has been running since 2009

• **Target population is app. 600,000 people per screening round:**
  - 1th screening round: April 2009 – March 2011,

• **Testing method:**
  - faecal immunochemical test (FIT) with automatic readings in one central laboratory,
  - screening colonoscopy provided for all patients with positive FIT.
Invitation to screening programme

Invitee responds with signed consent

Respondent receives testing kit for 2 stool samples by post

Respondent not returning the test kit

Written reminder 2X

Respondent returning the test kit to the central lab by post

Test results for tested participants

Positive

Colonoscopy

Negative

Invited for FIT in 2 years

No response

Written reminder

HOW TO MAKE A LONG-TERM EFFORT SUSTAINABLE
STAKEHOLDERS CONSOLIDATION

• Identification and inclusion of all the partners who were crucial for the organization and implementation of the programme in a health network with a clear common objective.

• The representatives of the medical specialties found a common language with the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Slovenia.
HOW TO MAKE A LONG-TERM EFFORT SUSTAINABLE

LEGAL BASIS

Implementation:

• Health care and health insurance act with the line of ensuring prevention and screening programmes for compulsory insured population
• Existing rules on carrying out preventive health care at the primary level were amended with Svit programme in 2007
• Rules on the implementation of national screening programmes for the early detection of precancerous changes and cancer covering cervical, breast and colorectal cancer screening were adopted in 2018

Legal basis for personal data handling:

• From the start the programme operated on the positive opinion of the Information Commissioner.
• In 2018 Healthcare Databases Act was amended with Svit Programme Registry

Financing:

• Secure funding from Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia is enabled through general agreement between government, health providers and Health Insurance Institute with yearly option of smaller changes
HOW TO MAKE A LONG-TERM EFFORT SUSTAINABLE
MONITOR, ANALISE, ACT, PRESENT

• Monitoring the performance and outcomes
• Information system covers eligible population, invitation, informed consent, FIT testing, colonoscopy clinical record, pathology exam, medical consilium recommendation

Service providers quality assurance:
• Only colonoscopical and histopathological centres, colonoscopists and pathologists who meet the entry criteria of quality standards are involved in CRC screening
• By analysing the data collected in the programme information system the quality indicators are regularly monitored
• Bad performance is the reason for exclusion from the list of Svit providers

Colonoscopy providers quality assurance as an example:
• Online presentation of indicators is available per colonoscopist and per centre as part of online interface with the Svit information system supporting the colonoscopy procedure and results registration
• Detailed indicator results are part of discussion in regular supervision visits to colonoscopy centres
• Indicator results oriented topics are presented at an annual colonoscopist training module
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Svit indicators by 2-year screening rounds</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Fourth</th>
<th>Fifth*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invitation sent</td>
<td>536,709</td>
<td>502,488</td>
<td>501,391</td>
<td>607,123</td>
<td>611,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage by invitation</td>
<td>99.3%</td>
<td>99.6%</td>
<td>99.6%</td>
<td>99.6%</td>
<td>99.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitation response rate</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals with exclusion criteria (self reported and colorectal pathology found in screening)</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uptake / participation rate</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive FIT rate</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonoscopy after positive FIT rate</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
<td>93.1%</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
<td>93.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*preliminary results
COLORECTAL CANCER INCIDENCE HAS BEEN DECREASING SINCE 2011

Source: Slovenian Cancer Registry, Institute of Oncology Ljubljana.
The leading cancer sites with percentage distribution, Slovenia 2017- incidence. The share of colorectal cancer among all cancers in Slovenia has decreased.

Net survival of patients diagnosed with colorectal cancer (C18-C20) aged 50-74 years, period 2011-2015

Source: Epidemiology and Cancer Registry, Institute of Oncology Ljubljana
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COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Written document Communication strategy from the start of the programme:
• based on the theory of planned behaviour and informed decision making
• accessibility of the programme also for foreign language speakers, for people with hearing and vision impairment or other disabilities
• targeted communication activities contributed to reducing health inequalities

Good name and recognizable brand:
• the programme is well accepted by the professional and general public and also by the target population
• high trust in the programme
Svit programme is well-organised and effective colorectal cancer screening programme with important impact on populations health.

https://www.program-svit.si/en/