CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

Award ID:
PP120207

Project Title:
Use of a FIT-Flu Intervention to Increase Colorectal Cancer Screening Rates in the Houston Metropolitan Area

Award Mechanism:
Evidence-Based Prevention Programs and Services

Principal Investigator:
Vining, David J

Entity:
The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

Lay Summary:

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States and the State of Texas. Colorectal cancer is curable when it is detected in its early stages but often deadly when diagnosed late. Scientific studies have shown that screening for the detection and treatment of certain polyps and early cancer helps to prevent or even cure colorectal cancer. According to the Centers for Disease Control, about 60% of deaths from colorectal cancer could be avoided with regular screening. Despite many screening options that exist today, only about half of Americans have undergone any type of screening during the past 5 years and that number is even less in minority populations who are more likely to be diagnosed with late stages of cancer.

To increase the number of people getting screened for colorectal cancer, we want to implement a program known as the FIT-FLU program. This program will offer a stool test, known as a FIT test, which stands for fecal immunochemical test, to patients receiving yearly flu shots. The patient will take the FIT test home, swab a small amount of stool on a stick, place the stick in a plastic container, and then mail the container to a laboratory where it will be analyzed to detect small amounts of blood in the stool. Finding blood in the stool can indicate that there might be a colon polyp or mass causing the bleeding.

Working with Federally Qualified Health Centers in the Houston area, we plan to distribute 2,000 FIT tests each year for 2 years during flu seasons. We expect that about 150 people each year will be found to have blood in their stool that will require further evaluation. We will then provide a colonoscopy examination to those with a positive stool test for further evaluation.

If successful, the FIT-Flu program could be used across the State of Texas in clinics and communities to increase colorectal cancer screening and reduce the chance that people will die from this disease.