

Transforming Cancer Pathways: Supporting Earlier Identification

Cancer mortality rates are higher in areas of deprivation

Every year there are roughly 42,000 new cases of bowel cancer - representing approximately 11% of all new cancer cases¹ - and resulting in over 15,330 deaths a year.² Through increased routine screening and earlier diagnosis, it is expected that 54% of bowel cancer cases in the UK are preventable.³

Efforts to increase earlier screening and diagnosis

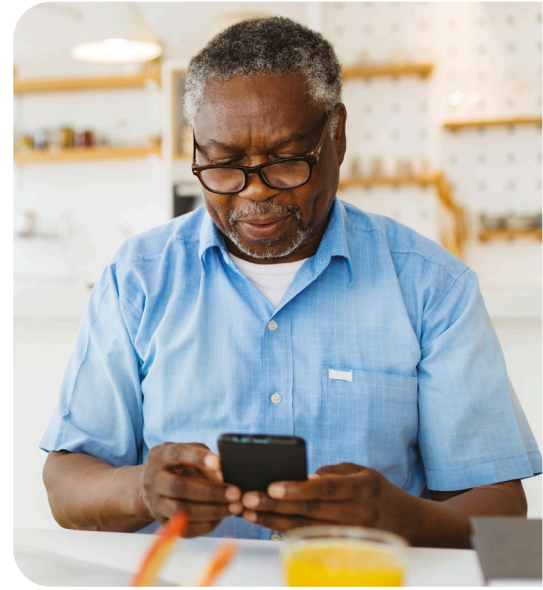
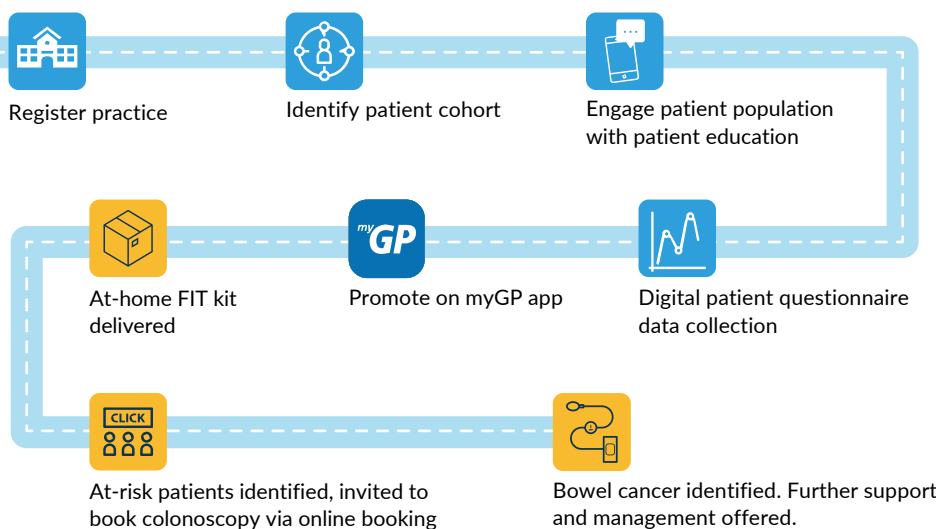
The NHS now distributes free Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) kits to a wider age group of people aged between 50 and 74 in England who are registered with a GP practice. Increased FIT kit completion promotes earlier detection of bowel cancer at stages 1-2 rather than 3-4, supporting better health outcomes and lower treatment costs.⁴

Breaking down barriers

Not everyone who is eligible for screening has the same opportunities of access. Some patient groups have persistently lower uptake than the rest of the population; these include non-white people, those for whom English isn't their first language, people with a severe mental health condition, and those with learning disabilities. Navigating language barriers and the perceived negative stigma around cancer screening and diagnosis can mean some patients fear screenings and believe the subject to be taboo.⁵

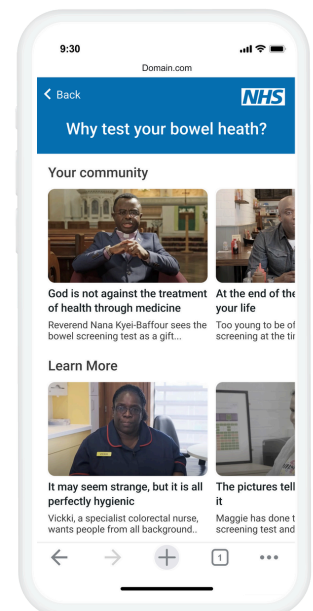
It can also include those from lower socio-economic background who might face practical barriers to attending screening due to challenges around getting time off work, arranging childcare and travel costs.

iPLATO is working to improve regional bowel cancer screening rates across the country using patient education to improving understanding within communities and normalise screening.



Evidence

- Digital Patient Questionnaires with a completion rate of up to 42%
- SMS reminder programme increased bowel cancer screening uptake by 16%



References

1. Cancer Research UK, Bowel cancer statistics, (Accessed: May 2023).
2. Bowel Cancer UK, Bowel cancer costs the UK £1.74 billion a year, (Accessed: May 2023).
3. Cancer Research UK, Bowel cancer statistics, (Accessed: May 2023).
4. York Health Economics Consortium, Accelerating early identification of cancer in primary care using an artificial intelligence driven solution, (Accessed: May 2023).
5. Cancer Research UK, Health Inequalities breaking down barriers to cancer screening (Accessed: June 2024)