DIAGNOSTIC POTENTIAL OF FECAL IMMUNOCHEMICAL TESTING OUTSIDE THE NATIONAL COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM IN DENMARK: A NATIONWIDE COHORT STUDY

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A Danish cohort study of 19,787 individuals who underwent fecal immunochemical testing outside the national colorectal cancer screening program from 2014 to 2021 found that 22% had positive results, with positive tests associated with higher one-year risks of colorectal cancer and inflammatory bowel disease.

KEY POINTS

- Among 4,283 individuals with positive FIT results, 7.9% were diagnosed with colorectal cancer within one year compared to 0.2% of those with negative results, yielding a risk difference of 7.7 percentage points.
- Positive FIT results were associated with a median time to colorectal cancer diagnosis of 28 days compared to 711 days for negative results.
- Among positive FIT individuals, 1.9% were diagnosed with inflammatory bowel disease within one year compared to 0.3% of negative FIT individuals, with a risk difference of 1.6 percentage points.
- The authors conclude that a negative test may suggest potential to rule out disease and could reduce unnecessary investigations in symptomatic patients, though differences in diagnoses reflect varied follow-up procedures.
- This study is relevant for clinicians using FIT to evaluate symptomatic patients for possible bowel pathology outside organized screening programs.

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