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UEMO 2003/108

REPORT FROM THE ESGE/UEGF JOINT MEETING ON COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING IN OSLO, NORWAY

As a UEMO representative I attended the above mentioned meeting in Oslo, Norway June 20.-22., 2003.

Naturally most of the participants in the meeting were gastroenterologists from the member countries, but there were also a few nurses trained to do colonoscopy, one patient treated from colorectal cancer, one doctor who was also a lawyer, and myself, the only GP.

I felt very wellcome and was invited to participate in one of their working groups as a regular member. I chose to be in the group dealing with legal and ethical considerations on colorectal cancer screening.

As could be expected, the meeting did not come up with one clear answer, that all the participants could agree to, to the question wether or not to recommend that screening for colorectal cancer should be started all over Europe.

The group I was in concluded as follows;

- 1) Fecal blood test should not be used as a screening method mainly because of its large number of false negatives.
- 2) Concerning flexibel sigmoidoscopy, there are several controlled trials going on, and we should wait for the results from these studies before considering sigmoidoscopy recommended as a screening method.
- 3) There are no studies going on to evaluate colonoscopy as a screening method, and we have no good data to show its cost - effectiveness as such. Colonoscopy as a screening method could be considered set up in a country, or in a part of a country, if certain requirements are fulfilled, some of the most important listed below;
 - a) There must be sufficient economy an manpower available to do screening without this having negativ impact on the ability to diagnose and treat patients with symptoms or disease.
 - b) It must be set up as randomized controlled studies so that we eventually will know if it is to be recommended world wide.

UEMO – PRESIDENCY

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- c) The same quality must be applied to screening as to therapeutic procedures.
- d) All persons should be seen by a doctor before undergoing colonoscopy.
- e) A screening program should be organized by an independent authority.
- f) A high level of information is necessary.

The above considerations were accepted by the plenum. The results of the meeting will be published in 2 articles in an international medical publication.

The plenum agreed that they would consider inviting more GP's to future meetings, and maybe also some interested politicians.

There will be no costs for the UEMO as the ESGE/EUGF covered all my expenses.

Dokka, Norway 31.08.03

Sincerely

Eirik Bø Larsen, Head of the Norwegian delegation