

# Cancer screening and early detection: Promoting early intervention in oncology.

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## Introduction

Cancer screening and early detection play a pivotal role in reducing cancer-related morbidity and mortality. Detecting cancer at an early stage significantly increases the chances of successful treatment and improved patient outcomes. Over the years, advancements in medical technology and research have led to the development of effective screening methods that enable the identification of cancer in its earliest stages. This article explores the importance of cancer screening, highlights commonly used screening methods, and discusses the impact of early detection on patient prognosis and survival rates [1].

Cancer screening is a proactive approach to detect cancer before symptoms become apparent. It aims to identify pre-cancerous or early-stage cancerous lesions when treatment options are more effective and less invasive. Regular screening can lead to early detection, enabling timely interventions, and ultimately saving lives. Moreover, screening programs help identify individuals at high risk of developing specific cancers, allowing for targeted preventive measures and close monitoring [2].

a. **Mammography:** Mammograms are X-ray examinations of the breasts and are primarily used for breast cancer screening. Regular mammography can detect breast cancer at an early stage, often before it can be felt. This screening method has shown to significantly reduce breast cancer mortality rates.

b. **Pap smear and hpv testing:** Pap smears, also known as Pap tests, are used to screen for cervical cancer. This procedure involves collecting cells from the cervix to detect any abnormal changes. Human papillomavirus (HPV) testing is often performed in conjunction with Pap smears to identify high-risk HPV strains that can cause cervical cancer [3].

c. **Colonoscopy:** Colonoscopy is a procedure that examines the colon and rectum to detect colorectal cancer and precancerous polyps. During this test, a flexible tube with a camera is inserted into the colon, allowing for the visualization and removal of abnormal growths.

d. **Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) Test:** The PSA test is used to screen for prostate cancer in men. It measures the levels of PSA, a protein produced by the prostate gland, in the blood. Elevated PSA levels may indicate the presence of prostate cancer, although further diagnostic tests, such as a biopsy, are required for confirmation [4].

e. **Lung cancer screening:** Low-Dose Computed Tomography (LDCT) scans are employed for lung cancer screening in high-risk individuals, such as heavy smokers. LDCT scans use X-rays to create detailed images of the lungs, aiding in the detection of lung nodules or tumors at an early stage.

f. **Improved treatment outcomes:** When cancer is detected early, treatment options are more likely to be effective. Early-stage cancers are often more localized and have not spread to nearby lymph nodes or distant sites, making them more amenable to curative interventions, such as surgery or targeted therapies.

g. **Reduced treatment complexity:** Early-stage cancers generally require less aggressive and invasive treatment approaches compared to advanced-stage cancers. This can lead to reduced morbidity, shorter recovery periods, and improved quality of life for patients.

h. **Increased survival rates:** Early detection is associated with higher survival rates for many types of cancer. Several studies have demonstrated that early-stage cancer detection leads to better long-term survival and overall prognosis.

i. **Cost-effectiveness:** Detecting cancer at an early stage can result in cost savings in the long run. Early intervention reduces the need for extensive treatments, hospitalizations, and supportive care for advanced-stage cancer [5].

## Conclusion

Cancer screening and early detection play a pivotal role in promoting early intervention and improving outcomes in oncology. These strategies aim to identify cancer at its earliest stages or detect precancerous changes, enabling timely treatment and potentially reducing mortality rates.

Screening programs, such as mammograms for breast cancer, Pap tests for cervical cancer, and colonoscopies for colorectal cancer, have been instrumental in detecting cancers at an early stage when they are more treatable. These programs have led to significant reductions in cancer-related deaths and have become vital components of public health initiatives worldwide.

Advancements in medical imaging technologies, such as Computed Tomography (CT) scans and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), have further enhanced cancer screening capabilities. These imaging modalities allow for the detection

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Received: 03-Jun-2023, Manuscript No.AACOCR-23-104450; Editor assigned: 06-Jun-2023, PreQC No.AACOCR-23-104450 (PQ); Reviewed: 20-Jun-2023, QC No.AACOCR-23-104450; Revised: 23-Jun-2023, Manuscript No.AACOCR-23-104450 (R); Published: 27-Jun-2023, DOI:10.35841/aacocr-6.3.148

of small tumors or abnormalities that may be missed by other screening methods, thereby enabling early intervention and potentially curative treatments

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