Peer Review Report

Review Report on Organized Colorectal Cancer Screening Programs in Switzerland – Quo Vadis?

Original Article, Int. J. Public Health

Reviewer: Stefania Arena
Submitted on: 26 Feb 2025
Article DOI: 10.3389/ijph.2025.1608183

EVALUATION

Q 1 **Please summarize the main findings of the study.**

In this manuscript entitled “Organized Colorectal Cancer Screening Programs in Switzerland – Quo Vadis?”, the authors provided an overview of the characteristics of current organized CRC screening programs in Switzerland. Interviews were conducted with clinical or administrative leads for CRC screening programs to understand key characteristics, including host organization, enrollment pathways, screening modalities, and program providers. Eleven of thirteen existing or planned 2021 programs participated, including subjects aged 50–69 years and at average risk of CRC. The results confirmed that the Swiss landscape of organized CRC screening programs has developed significantly in recent years and continues to grow. Existing programs share several common elements but also differences, reflecting cantonal efforts to align program characteristics and delivery to local implementation conditions. The authors have worked on an interesting topic. The manuscript, in my opinion, is of good quality, but has some limitations and issues to clarify.

Q 2 **Please highlight the limitations and strengths.**

A strength of this manuscript is the broad participation of organized CRC screening programs in Switzerland that existed at the time of data collection, helping to create a comprehensive overview of common characteristics. However, one limitation is the limited time in which the data were collected, which cannot be generalized, as the Swiss healthcare system is constantly evolving.

Q 3 **Please provide your detailed review report to the authors. The editors prefer to receive your review structured in major and minor comments. Please consider in your review the methods (statistical methods valid and correctly applied (e.g. sample size, choice of test), is the study replicable based on the method description?), results, data interpretation and references. If there are any objective errors, or if the conclusions are not supported, you should detail your concerns.**

Minor revision:

Introduction
In lines 71–75, following the sentence “As of October 2024, ten cantons (…) or were in the process of preparing one (n=1)", I would add the bibliographic reference. I would do the same with the phrase “Thus, the landscape of these programs in Switzerland has developed substantially in the past decade”, in lines 88–89.

Methods
I suggest inserting subparagraphs, for greater clarity. For example:
– a subparagraph “OCCSI Study”, with some more information on the study, which is not clear when reading the manuscript;
– a subsection called “Programs,” where I would write some information about programs selection, e.g. “All existing or planned CRC screening programs in December 2021 were included. The research team requested contact information for the clinical or administrative leaders. Programs for which contact information was shared were invited to participate in the study”;
– a subparagraph “data collection”.

In lines 126-127, the authors wrote “The information included in these validated factsheets was then analyzed and synthesized.” I would suggest changing the phrase “analyzed and synthesized” to “synthesized and discussed.”

Discussion
I suggest changing the subsection “limits” to “limits and strengths”, spending a few more words to the strengths.

Conclusions
In lines 328-330 the authors wrote “While only two programs existed in 2015, residents in fifteen cantons had access to organized screening by 2024, with one further program to become operational soon.” I suggest removing this phrase, because it was not previously anticipated in the discussion and its reference is unclear. The conclusions should not include information that was not previously discussed and is unclear. Alternatively, I suggest inserting this sentence into the discussion, making it more understandable and adding bibliographical references.

PLEASE COMMENT

Q 4 **Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?**

The title is appropriate and attractive.

Q 5 **Are the keywords appropriate?**

The keywords are appropriate.

Q 6 **Is the English language of sufficient quality?**

English language is of sufficient quality.

Q 7 **Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?**

Yes.

Q 8 **Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?)**

The bibliographic references are adequate.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Q 9 **Originality**

Q 10 **Rigor**

Q 11 **Significance to the field**

Q 12 **Interest to a general audience**

Q 13 **Quality of the writing**

Q 14 **Overall scientific quality of the study**

REVISION LEVEL

Q 15 **Please make a recommendation based on your comments:**

Minor revisions.