

Summary report: Bowel Cancer Information Session

On 19 July 2024 we were invited by The Healing Church of God in Christ (THCOGIC) Community, based in Paddington, to deliver an online health information session on bowel cancer.

Background and development of the session

This was the fourth online health awareness session held in collaboration with the THCOGIC Community. After the success of earlier online sessions, which consisted of a two-part session focused on dementia ([‘What is dementia?’](#) June 2023 and [‘Management of dementia following diagnosis’](#) August 2023) and a recent session on [stroke](#) (March 2024), we were invited to identify speakers on health-related topics prioritised by the THCOGIC Community to raise awareness through online community engagement sessions.

July’s session speakers were Dr Rhea Harewood, (Post-doctoral Research Fellow, Cancer Screening & Prevention Research Group, Imperial College London) and Keuri Patel (Health Improvement Lead for Bowel Screening in West London, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust). In addition, Kelly Gleason (Cancer Research UK Senior Research Nurse, Department of Surgery and Cancer, Imperial College London) joined the session and Q&A.

Prior to the session, a planning meeting was held online with our community contact from THCOGIC, which was attended by Dr Rhea Harewood, Keuri Patel and Naomi Asantewa-Sechereh (Imperial Patient Experience Research Centre).

Attendees:

Approximately 39 Zoom accounts joined the online session, this represented individuals and families across the THCOGIC Community in Paddington but also their associated Churches in Essex and Ealing.

The audience is cross-generational and the session was attended by individuals, families and carers.

Promotion for the information session was led by THCOGIC who developed a flyer (right) which was disseminated across their network.

Format and aims of the session:

The session started with key members of THCOGIC Community welcoming the team and briefly sharing why this session was important. As this is a Church community, an opening prayer and reading was done before the main presentation started.

Round Table
Every Friday - Time 8pm

BOWEL CANCER CAUSES AND PREVENTION

Dr Rhea Harewood
Cancer Screening and Prevention
Research Group, Imperial College
London

Keuri Patel
Health Improvement Lead,
West London Bowel Screening
Programme

Join Dr Rhea Harewood & Keuri Patel for the facts

Date: 19/07/24 at 8pm
Join us ONLINE via ZOOM
THCOGIC's Zoom Meeting
Download app or join via web link
Meeting ID: | Passcode:

A 1.5 hour online session was delivered (two presentations of 20-25 minutes each and 45 minutes of Q&A). The broad aim of the session was to increase awareness of bowel cancer and screening in this community.

Keuri Patel delivered the first talk, which focused on the signs and symptoms of bowel cancer and the bowel cancer screening programme (i.e. who is eligible for bowel cancer screening and how to complete a screening test). The content of Keuri's talk included:

- What does my bowel do?
- Early detection and why cancer screening is important
- What is a polyp?
- Signs and symptoms
- How the bowel cancer screening programme works
- Keeping your bowel healthy

Audience questions were invited during and after the first talk which are listed below:

Questions asked:

- Does bowel cancer give other cancer?
- Is there a diet that can prevent bowel cancer?
- How regular should the screening be done?
- Is it only when a polyp bleeds can bowel cancer be detected?
- Is the polyp the only reason you could have blood in your stool?
- What if you're outside of the age range, can you still get a kit to be screened?
- Could ongoing constipation lead to bowel cancer?
- Does the increased incidence of microplastics or other pollutants in our food, water or air play any part in bowel cancer; or is just diet and sedentary lifestyle?
- Could a colon cleanse or colonic irrigation be a good idea to flush out waste?

Dr Rhea Harewood delivered the second talk, which focused on risk factors for bowel cancer (i.e., who is more or less likely to get bowel cancer) and research being done at Imperial to better understand and improve bowel screening. The content of Rhea's talk included:

- What is the bowel?
- Cancer in the UK
- What is bowel cancer?
- Who is at risk of bowel cancer?
- How can we improve screening for bowel cancer?
- Barriers to screening for bowel cancer
- What causes bowel cancer?
- What reduces chances of bowel cancer?
- What are ways to prevent bowel cancer?

Following both talks the remaining time was used for further audience questions (some of which had been collated before the session from the community).

Questions asked:

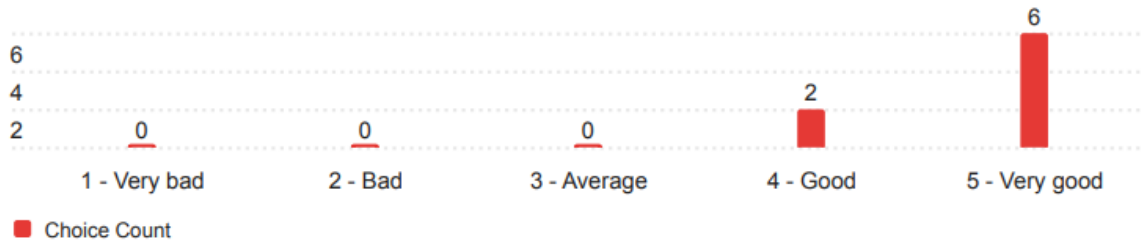
- What is it about these foods that is causing incidences of polyps that become cancerous? Are they causing inflammation – what is the trigger?
- I have a brother who died of bowel cancer, am I at risk of developing bowel cancer? I am under 50, how do I get checked?
- Can the lump in the bowel be felt by your hand?
- For years my poo is very smelly and I get embarrassed. Should I be embarrassed?
- My friend opens her bowel twice weekly – is that normal?
- If you receive a positive result from the screening, what happens next?
- Sometimes I go to the bathroom twice a day – is that good or bad?
- If most people have polyps, how bad would the polyps have to be to have them removed?
- What are your thoughts as to why the uptake of testing and screening from the BAME community is so low?
- Thinking about the results from your extensive research, have you ever successfully identified strategies of addressing cultural and psychological barriers of men who can have perceived vulnerabilities from having anything, including medical instruments, inserted into their anus?
- Do you think there is anything that the church can do, especially churches that in areas of low screening uptake? Are there initiatives we could best employ e.g. wellness programme to help people to be physically well as well as spiritually well?
- If you have to do surgery for bowel cancer, do you end up losing part of the bowel? Do you have to have a colostomy bag?
- Does bowel cancer affect the digestive system as a whole and not only limited to the bowel?
- Did you imagine working with poo from an early age, how did you get interested in this line of medicine?
- I had an operation to remove a polyp two years ago and it was alright.

Appendix 1: Feedback from attendees

Following the session, an online feedback form was shared with the attendees. The responses from the 8 completed online feedback forms are shared below:

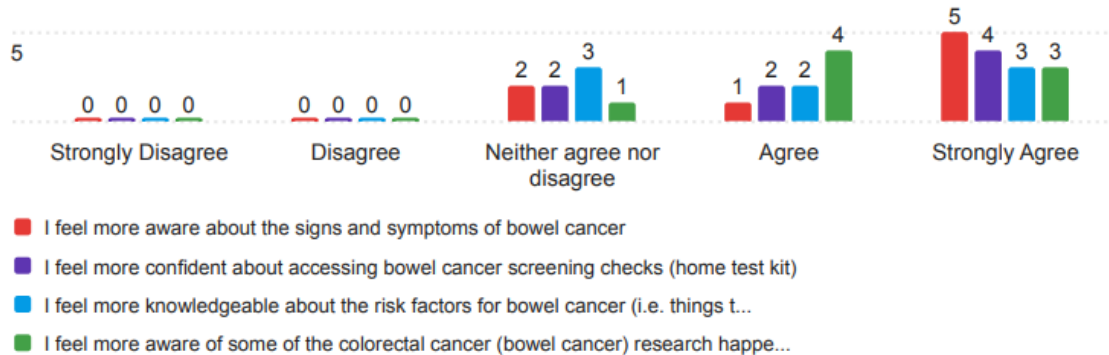
Q1 - Overall, how would you rate the session?

8 Responses



Q2 - Please rate the following statements. After attending this session:

8 Responses



Q3 - After attending this session, do you think research could benefit you and your family?

8 Responses



Q4. Do you think the information presented during the session has helped you in any way? If yes, please let us know how: (free-text)

My knowledge of the colorectal cancer has been greatly increase.

This session has been productive and very helpful for now and in the future.

More awareness

Its impressed how important it is to get your screening done

This is an excellent eye opening topic.

The details and information are very helpful too

I have already done the test before so I know about the test that take place as a kit was sent to my address . I understand having a healthy diet . Keeping fit with exercise drink more water .

Speakers shared their knowledge clearly and offered space for questions. Sadly I had to leave near the end of the Q and A's.

I was able to make notes that I can refer to.

Q5. What did you like most about the session? (free-text)

I like the fact that a kit has been developed that is accessible to everyone to at home.

Understanding the importance to get checked every two years because it is hogg risk on the family

Presentation and the Q&A

The presenters were knowledgeable about their fields

On going research

It was informative

Knowledge being clearly presented and the speakers being personable.

The presenters were very clear & informative.

Q6. What could we do better next time? (free-text)

Keep encouraging and highlighting the importance of taking care of yourself eating well, exercising.

N/A

The relevant information was presented

This has been great get more people to get involved and have awareness

The lady sometimes said she was not specialist in some areas . But she was very helpful.

Excellent session. Nothing else needed.

Not sure.