
ESTABLISH A SYSTEM FOR STRUCTURED ASSESSMENT

A cancer risk assessment system includes a standardized process for family history collection and interpretation as well as guidance for developing a personalized management plan for patients.



Assemble a team

Assess your current practice

Determine your goals

Plan a workflow for collection, documentation, interpretation and management

Select a tool to help structure data collection and interpretation

Create evaluation plan

To improve identification of individuals at increased risk of colorectal cancer, primary care clinicians need to recognize those patients who have a personal and family history that increases their cancer risk and identify the appropriate cancer screening and genetic services indicated for a given patient. The most successful programs are those that engage the entire practice in developing and implementing a systematic, team-based approach to family history collection and interpretation.

Chapter 2 is intended to help practices establish a system for cancer family history collection and risk assessment. This process can and should be customized to the needs of your practice. It can also be adapted to coordinate with other initiatives, such as assessing risk for a more comprehensive list of conditions, promoting cancer screening among eligible

best practices and different methods for family history collection and risk assessment to identify opportunities for improvements to the clinic workflow, if needed. Generally, a family history process identifies when to collect and where to document family history data, the team members who are involved in collection and interpretation, and any tools used to aid the patient or provider in collecting or assessing family history. Practices should also consider CRC screening protocols based on professional society guidelines for increased risk individuals and collaboration with genetic and other cancer specialists for referral and consultation for individuals at high risk.

Adopting a new process in clinical practice is a major endeavor. Before embarking on the planning activities outlined in Chapter 2, you should take stock of your organization and its resources to determine whether you are ready to make this change. A precursor activity may be to conduct a needs assessment within the practice or health system, which could include formal or informal surveying of staff as well as calculating baseline risk assessment and screening rates for the increased risk population. Even with compelling needs assessment data, you still may find that your organization is not yet fully ready to adopt a new system and thus needs to take intermediate steps to prepare.

The following sections were adapted with permission from AHRQ¹:

- Assembling a team
- Assessing your existing workflow
- Setting goals and the Goals Worksheet
- Identifying opportunities for improvement and defining new workflow
- Training
- Planning for launch
- Monitoring and evaluation

patients, or rapid diagnosis of individuals presenting with alarm signs and symptoms of cancer.

This chapter will guide practices through setting goals for family history collection, assessing current processes, and working through