Hemoccult II test, one-view mammography and the Pap-smear test. The paper discusses the characteristics of each of these tests along with the natural history of the cancer diseases in a comparative analysis. The aim is to give the reader an intuitive understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of these screening technologies. Evidence from recent trials is used when available.

Methods: For each of the screening modes a cost effectiveness analysis is presented. The analyses are based on simulated costs and effects using evidence from existing screening data and generalising these by way of mathematical modelling. In this paper focus is not on the detailed characteristics of the model, but rather on the results of each cost effectiveness analysis. In each evaluation the costs and effects of a series of mutually exclusive screening programmes were simulated for various target groups and screening intervals. Within each set of mutually exclusive programme setups, programmes were identified which at each level of cost maximises life-years gained. Each efficiency curve constitutes this subset of dominating programmes.

Results: The relative positioning and the shape of each of the efficiency curves are discussed in light of the respective disease- and test characteristics. Efficient colorectal cancer screening programmes are characterised by being less effective but more cost effective relative to mammography and cervical cancer screening. The efficiency curve is relatively linear showing very little tendency to curve upwards with incremental costs ranging from $2625 to $6570. The incremental cost range for efficient mammography screening programmes as well as cervical cancer programmes is much wider with maximum incremental costs of $79,870 and $77,290, respectively.

Discussion: For colorectal cancer decreasing the screening interval has no significant effect on cost per additional life-year because the number of cancers detected is increased considerably when the screening programme is intensified. The reason being that the Hemoccult II test is inexpensive, has a low sensitivity and the latency period of the disease is short. The steep slope of the cervical cancer screening curve is explained by the long sojourn time and the high sensitivity of the screening test which renders it unnecessary to screen frequently. Incremental costs rise markedly if the screening interval is reduced beyond 4 years. For mammae cancer the slope is likewise steep which is also explained by the high sensitivity of mammography, the length of the average sojourn time and a relatively low specificity. However, since the latency period for this type of cancer is considerably shorter than for cervical cancer, it is reasonably cost effective to screen as often as every 2 years. This paper suggests that in a Danish setting an optimal programme constellation would be to introduce annual colorectal cancer screening of the 50-74 year olds along with biennial mammography targeted at the 50-69 year olds and cervical cancer screening every 4 years for the 25-59 year olds. This would entail an overall maximum cost per life-year of $9060.

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PP32. The impact of cancer on premature death in Japan

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Background: The primary cause of death in Japan is by malignant neoplasm, of which 20% is due to gastric cancer. In Japan, cancer accounts for 38% of total premature death among people in the 0-64 age category. The objective of preventing premature death by cancer was a feature of the 1983 Health Care Law for the Elderly. Since the introduction of Health Care Law for the Elderly, screening for cancer has become readily available throughout Japan. Moreover, this law cites the screening of five different types of cancer : gastric cancer, endometrial cancer, lung cancer, colorectal cancer and breast cancer.

Methods: 1) Calculation of potential years of life loss (PYLL) PYLL is calculated by subtracting the age of death from a defined length of life end point. In the present study, the length of life end point was assumed to be 65 years of age. By using the Ministry of Health and Welfare's Vital Statistics, I calculated the PYLL between 1950 and 1993. In order to compare the PYLL between populations of varying size and age structure over the said period, age-adjustment based on the 1993 Japanese population was undertaken.

2) PYLL and medical expenditures

Only direct medical costs were included in the analysis. National Medical Expenditures, taken from government statistics, were assumed to constitute the direct costs. I compared the PYLL with medical expenditures between 1977 and 1993 for the following categories: malignant neoplasm; cardiovascular disease; total disease.

Results: The PYLL attributable to cancer, cardiovascular disease and total disease has been decreasing over time. Since 1972, the PYLL due to malignant neoplasm has exceeded that caused by cardiovascular disease. Moreover, although gastric cancer induced PYLL has been falling, lung cancer-related PYLL has been increasing.

However, the overall reduction in PYLL has coincided with a rapid increase in medical expenditure for the 0-64 age category. Nevertheless, between 1977 and 1993, for the malignant neoplasm and cardiovascular disease categories, the PYLL has decreased in excess of the increase in medical expenditures.

Discussion: A reduction in premature death by cancer is the ultimate goal in cancer control. Japan's rapidly aging population has compounded the problems surrounding premature death. That is, the percentage of the total population that are in a working age group is declining, and therefore the prevention of premature death is an objective that is related to maintaining the productive power of the total population.

In an attempt at measuring the impact of cancer-related premature death, I compared the change in the cancer induced PYLL during the 1950 to 1993 period. Although death by cancer increased in all aged groups, cancer-related premature death decreased. Rising medical expenditures may have contributed to the decrease in the PYLL caused by cancer.

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PP33. The benefit of stabilization under chemotherapy in metastatic colorectal cancer patients: A French prospective study

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Background: The clinical benefit of chemotherapy is usually evaluated in terms of major reduction of tumor volume. In metastatic colorectal cancer, however, response rates to second line chemotherapy are usually modest, whereas stabilization is obtained in about half of the patients. To assess whether stabilization brings about palliative benefits notwithstanding possible deleterious toxicity effects, we compared Quality of Life (QoL) and use of hospital resources in a French prospective survey on patients initiating a second-line palliative chemotherapy for metastatic colorectal cancer.

Methods: 80 patients were enrolled in 21 public and private sites between September 1995 and April 1996, and followed up for 4 months. Tumor assessment and symptomatic status were reported at each cycle, allowing dynamic patient categorization from Initial State into Response (R), STable Disease (STD), Progressive Disease (PD) and Terminal state (T). A QoL questionnaire derived from the Health Utility Index (HUI) was self-completed at baseline, week 8 and week 16 and at treatment drop-out. This index includes 6 QoL dimensions –Mobility, Self-Care, Fatigue, Emotion, Perception of the future, Cognition–, and 3 symptoms –Pain, Nausea/Vomiting, Hair Loss–. Hospital stays were recoded into the French Diagnosis-Related Groups (DRG) classification.

Results: Most used regimens were De Gramont, and protracted low dose 5FU, oxaliplatin associations and Irinotecan as single agent. 9 patients responded to treatment, with R lasting more than 4 weeks; 32 patients were stabilized for at least 4 weeks and categorized as STD until progression or death. Mobility, Self-Care and Pain mean scores were significantly better ($p < 0.05$) for STD than for PD; mean Pain scores (6-point scale) decrease from 2.5 ((1,4) at Initial State to 1.6 ((0.6) for R and 2.00 ((1.1) for STD, increasing to 2.8 ((1.2) under PD, and culminating at 4.50 ((0.7) at T.