

PURPOSE

The purpose of Waitemata DHB's four year BowelScreening pilot is to determine whether organised bowel screening can be introduced in New Zealand in a way that is effective, safe and acceptable for participants, equitable and economically efficient. Eligible residents aged between 50 and 74 should be invited to test for bowel cancer twice during the programme.

One of the key aims is to determine whether a national programme can be delivered in a manner which eliminates, or does not increase, current inequalities between population groups.

Results from the first cycle of the pilot (2012 and 2013) showed inequalities in participation had emerged. Participation rates for Maori and Pacific people were lower than for Asian and Other populations.

The BowelScreening team moved from a 'one size fits all' approach to a more personal one-on-one approach to actively follow up people in our priority populations, and early indications are that this approach is working.

talanoa fesaga'i

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STRIVING FOR EQUITY

How person-to-person contact can reduce inequalities in a population based screening pilot

Initiatives and changes we made to reduce inequalities in access and participation:

I care about my health but it's all so confusing. I don't understand the letter or the instructions

INNOVATION

Okay thanks for that feedback, we have carried out a health literacy review and simplified and changed our invitations, consent form and instructions. We are delighted that this has coincided with improvements in Maori and Pacific participation and a significant drop in the number of 'spoilt' kits being sent back to the lab.

I've been sent a bowel screening test kit from the Waitemata DHB but it's not my thing

INNOVATION

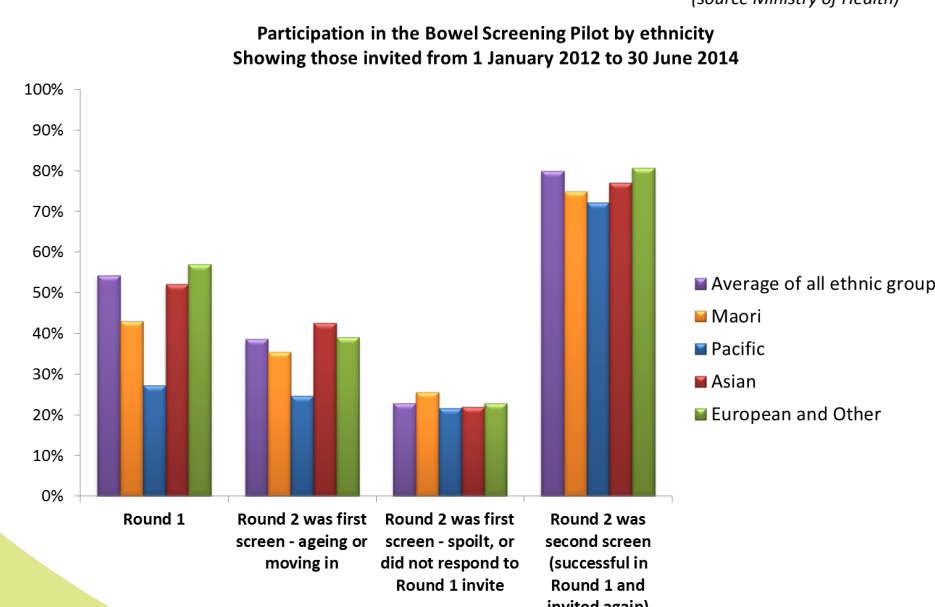
We have a problem here and we have listened. We need to reduce inequity of participation and ensure a national bowel screening programme can be introduced and delivered in a manner that eliminates, or does not increase, current inequalities between population groups. We have consulted with our Te Roopu Kaitiaki, the National Bowel Screening Advisory Group, Pacific advisers and community. We have remodelled the data base to ensure we have integrity of data to capture your 'side of the story' and record what the barriers to participation are so changes can be made, for example, wrong number, address etc.

I'm wondering if bowel screening is for me, it seems a little bit embarrassing talking about private things.

REDUCING DISPARITY

We understand and we really want you to take part!
We have initiated a telephone follow-up service and recruited staff specifically to follow up Maori and Pacific people who have not responded to a test kit invitation. They are phoned (a minimum of three attempts are made) and encouraged to participate and offered home-based support from community coordinators. We have language appropriate callers and cultural support if needed. Our graph below shows there has been a significant improvement in participation rates for Maori and Pacific people.

Table 1: Participation Rates from beginning of Pilot to first six months of Second Round
(Source: Ministry of Health)



The latest Ministry of Health BowelScreening Pilot Results notes that provisional results indicate that ethnic disparity has lessened in the first six months of Round 2. For Māori taking part for the first time in Round 2 who didn't participate in Round 1 (2012-2013) there is no equity gap and Māori participation was 2% higher than the average of all ethnic groups. For Pacific people the equity gap has also diminished from 26% in Round 1 to just under 3% in the first 6 months of Round 2 (Jan-June 2014). The numbers in these categories are small, nonetheless the results are encouraging. For those who participated in Round 1 and again in Round 2, the gap between the Māori participation rate and the average participation rate has decreased from 11% to approximately 5% for the first two quarters of Round 2. For Pacific the participation gap has dropped from 36% to 16%.

I'm a little unsure about doing this test at home, I like to see my doctor for any medical issues.

INTEGRATION

We understand that it is unusual to get sent a medical test to do at home. We have listened to your concerns and have got primary care on board to support priority population patients. We have incorporated the bowel screening pilot into the electronic tools which GPs use to follow up on patients who have not participated in important population health programmes. Your doctor will discuss the benefits of bowel screening when you are next at the surgery, or he/she may contact you by letter or text to encourage you to participate.

Thanks for that. It was great to get the reminder phone calls and to be sent another test after I threw away the first. I was still really nervous so your community coordinator came around and talked to me and picked up the test.

LIKELY HEALTH GAINS

That's great news you have done the test. Bowel screening helps find cancer early when it can be more successfully treated. Every person is important to us, especially those in our 'priority populations'. It is early days yet but our figures show inequity is reducing.

kanohi ki te kanohi

CONCLUSION

Person to person contact seems to be more effective for some people in a priority population. It appears to have improved access to bowel screening. We have recorded the information to create strategies which will be valuable if there is a national roll-out.

"Being open with our community about the test is very important as they are keen to know and once they are informed they can then decide about participating. This is achieved by gaining their trust and connecting with them through whakapapa and meeting them kanohi ki te kanohi"
Ngāroimata Reid, Kaiwhakahaere Māori, Bowel Screening Pilot

"For Samoans, it is the person-to-person talanoa fesaga'i contact also. You need to get to know the people - learning about them and their families as well as sharing stuff about yourself. Once you connect, people trust you and will follow your advice regarding bowel screening."
Maria Kunitau, The Fono's Bowel Screening Health Promoter