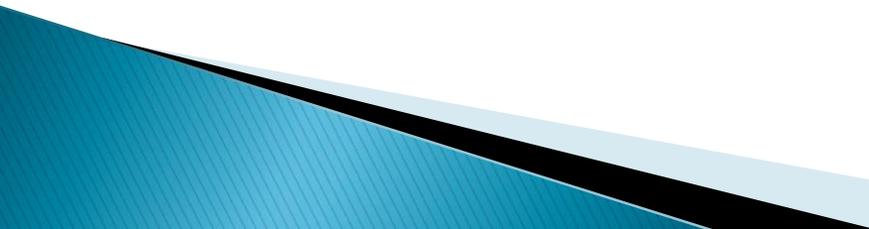


Northern Ireland cancer screening programmes – public knowledge & beliefs

D Anderson, A Graham,
M McCrory, C Donnelly
Public Health Agency &
Northern Ireland Cancer Registry

Introduction

- ▶ In 2014 the Public Health Agency started to develop a campaign to raise cancer awareness in the Northern Ireland public.
 - ▶ Part of the research undertaken to inform the direction of the campaign was a survey of the public's knowledge and beliefs about cancer, including the 3 Northern Ireland cancer screening programmes (breast, cervical and bowel).
- 

Aim

This presentation reports the findings from the cancer screening section of the survey, ie the Northern Ireland public's:

- ▶ knowledge about the three cancer screening programmes available in Northern Ireland
 - ▶ beliefs about cancer screening programmes
 - ▶ self-reported recent participation in the cancer screening programmes
- 

Survey methodology

- ▶ The Public Health Agency commissioned a market research company to conduct the survey.
 - ▶ The survey had a total sample of 1410 adults aged 16+.
 - ▶ Quota sampling was used to make sure the sample was representative of the Northern Ireland population in terms of age, gender, social class and area of residence.
 - ▶ Cancer screening questions were based on those used in an international study on cancer attitudes and beliefs (ICBP ABC survey tool).
 - ▶ The survey ran between 9 June and 11 July 2014; interviews were on a face-to-face basis.
- 

Questions

▶ Know

- As far as you are aware, is there a Northern Ireland Breast/Bowel/Cervical Screening Programme? At what age are people first invited for screening?

▶ Believe

- I would be so worried about what might be found at cancer screening that I would prefer not to have it
- Cancer screening is only necessary if I have symptoms
- Cancer screening could reduce my chance of dying from cancer

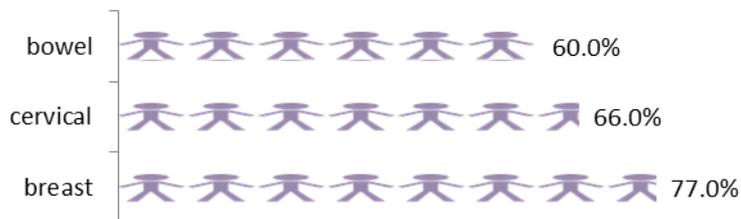
▶ Do

- Have you participated in cancer screening in the past 4–5 years?

Results

KNOW

What cancer screening programmes exist in N Ireland?



- 42% of those aware of the breast screening programme knew correctly that the 1st invitation is sent to women aged 49 - 52
- of those aware of the cervical cancer screening programmes, 26 was the average age quoted for 1st invitation (correct answer is 25)
- of those aware of the bowel cancer screening programme, 56 was the average age quoted for 1st invitation (correct answer is 60)

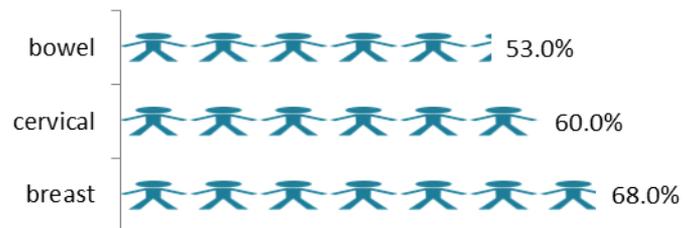
BELIEVE

Participating in cancer screening ...



DO

Participated in cancer screening in the last 4-5 years?



- the actual Northern Ireland bowel screening uptake in 2013/14 was 54.7% (standard is 55% uptake)
- the actual Northern Ireland cervical screening coverage in 2013/14 was 77.3% (Northern Ireland uses the English target of 80% as a guide)
- the actual Northern Ireland breast screening uptake in 2013/14 was 76.9% (minimum standard is $\geq 70\%$, with a target of 80%)

Results (contd)

There were a number of statistically significant differences, including:

1. Know

- people exposed to cancer (self, family or friends) and people living in less deprived areas were more likely to be aware of the cancer screening programmes available in Northern Ireland

2. Believe

- people exposed to cancer (self, family, friends) were less likely to be so worried about getting the results that they would prefer not to participate in cancer screening, they were also more likely to believe that participating in cervical and bowel cancer screening could reduce their chances of dying from these diseases
- people living in less deprived areas were less likely to believe that participating in breast and bowel cancer screening was only necessary if they had symptoms

3. Do

- people exposed to cancer (self, family or friends) were more likely say they had recently participated in breast and bowel cancer screening

Conclusions

- ▶ The results indicate reasonable levels of public awareness about, and self-reported recent participation in, the three cancer screening programmes in Northern Ireland.
- ▶ There was widespread belief about the benefits of participating in cancer screening but some respondents also felt deterred because of worry about what might be found and/or believing it was not necessary if they had no symptoms.
- ▶ This duality of views supports the theory that factors influencing health screening behaviours are multidimensional and include psychological factors, demographic and cultural characteristics.

