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10 Year Trial Backs Up Virtual Colonoscopy

Preliminary results of the ACRIN CT Colonography Trial, which is funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) showed a per-patient sensitivity of 90% for adenomatous colorectal lesions 1cm or larger in diameter, on par with optical colonoscopy. Colon cancer is the second most common cancer killer in the U.S., affecting one in 18 individuals. As virtual colonoscopy is a less expensive route, patients may benefit from shorter waiting times for exams, as well as a less invasive procedure in comparison to optical colonoscopy.

Optical colonoscopy is both diagnostic and therapeutic, and means that colorectal polyps can be removed concurrently with their detection. Nevertheless, only 8.3% of trial participants would have proceeded to same-day optical colonoscopy for removal of polyps 6mm or larger, a referral rate low enough to suggest that VC is a less expensive alternative for routine use in colorectal cancer screening.

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