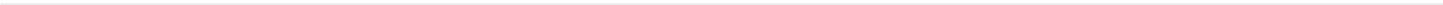




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## Resident Physicians' Perceptions of Barriers and Facilitators to Colorectal Cancer Screening for African Americans

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0027-9684\(15\)30602-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0027-9684(15)30602-7)

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### Background

African Americans experience disproportionately higher morbidity and mortality from colorectal cancer (CRC), yet they complete screening at lower rates than Caucasians. While studies have identified barriers and facilitators to CRC screening among African Americans, no study has examined physician perceptions of these barriers.

### Objective

The purpose of this study was to determine how resident physicians view barriers and facilitators to CRC screening among their African American patients, and to compare residents' perceptions with barriers and facilitators that have been reported in studies with African Americans.

**Design:** Both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained during in-depth interviews with 30 upper-year residents from an urban academic internal medicine program.

### Results

Residents recognized the low levels of awareness of CRC that have been reported among African American patients. The most common barriers reported by residents were lack of knowledge, fears, personal/social circumstances, and colonoscopy-specific concerns. Residents reported a need for increased education, increased public awareness, and easier scheduling as facilitators for screening. Residents failed to appreciate some key perceptions held by African Americans that have been documented to either impede or facilitate CRC screening completion, particularly the positive beliefs that could be used to overcome some of the perceived barriers.

### Conclusions

Residents may be missing opportunities to more effectively communicate about CRC screening with their African American patients. Residents need more explicit education about African Americans' perceptions to successfully promote screening behaviors in this high-risk population.

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### Keywords

colon; cancer; screening; African Americans; residency

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