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Life styles and colorectal: What we know and what we need to know – A Canadian perspective

Colorectal cancer (CRC) is a major health problem of increasing significance in Canada with estimated 22,000 new cases and 9,000 deaths in 2010. Descriptive epidemiological study suggests significant variations of CRC incidence rates across Canada with the highest incidence and average rates in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) and Ontario (ON), respectively. Research to date suggests that CRC is a result of complex interactions between genetic-environmental factors and diet has long been regarded as the most important environmental factor. Life styles and diet have long been regarded as important environmental factors, which are believed to be responsible for about 80% of all CRC cases. With the support from the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR), in 2001 a multidisciplinary team two Canadian provinces (NL and ON) launched a comprehensive research project involving more than 4,000 CRC cases and controls. Epidemiological research is a major component of this project. The team has made many important scientific discoveries in the past 10 years including: Identifying new genes and modifiable life styles factors, examining gene-environment interactions, evaluating clinical outcomes, and assessing psycho-social impact on patients and their families. In this presentation, the author will focus on epidemiological research findings by the accomplished by multidisciplinary to date including:

1. Briefly discuss of the epidemiology of CRC in Canada
2. Describe the large the large population based study and associated methodological issues.
3. Highlight major discoveries in epidemiological study achieved by this team so far.
4. Possible future studies and collaborations.

Biography

Wang received his MD (1983) and MSc (1986) in Epidemiology from Tianjin Medical University and obtained his PhD in Epidemiology (2003) from the Dalla Lana School of Public Health Sciences, University of Toronto. His research interests include: Cancer epidemiology, arthritis and disability, immigrants health and quality of life, health surveys and epidemiological modeling. Among many recognitions, he received the Arthritis Society and CIHR joint fellowship Award, distinguished visiting professor award from Tianjin Government, and Science and Chinese National Technology Achievement Award (as a co-recipient). He is the principal investigator of a colorectal cancer epidemiology project, which is part of a larger CIHR team grant involving more than 40 investigators across Canada. He is a reviewer for a number of funding agencies and academic journals; he has published more than 80 articles in peer reviewed scientific journals. Currently he is a Professor at the Memorial University of Newfoundland and distinguished visiting professor at Tianjin Medical University. Prior to his tenure at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, he was an assistant professor at University of Toronto and Scientific Associate at University Health Network in Toronto.

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