

FIT research study to rule out bowel cancer

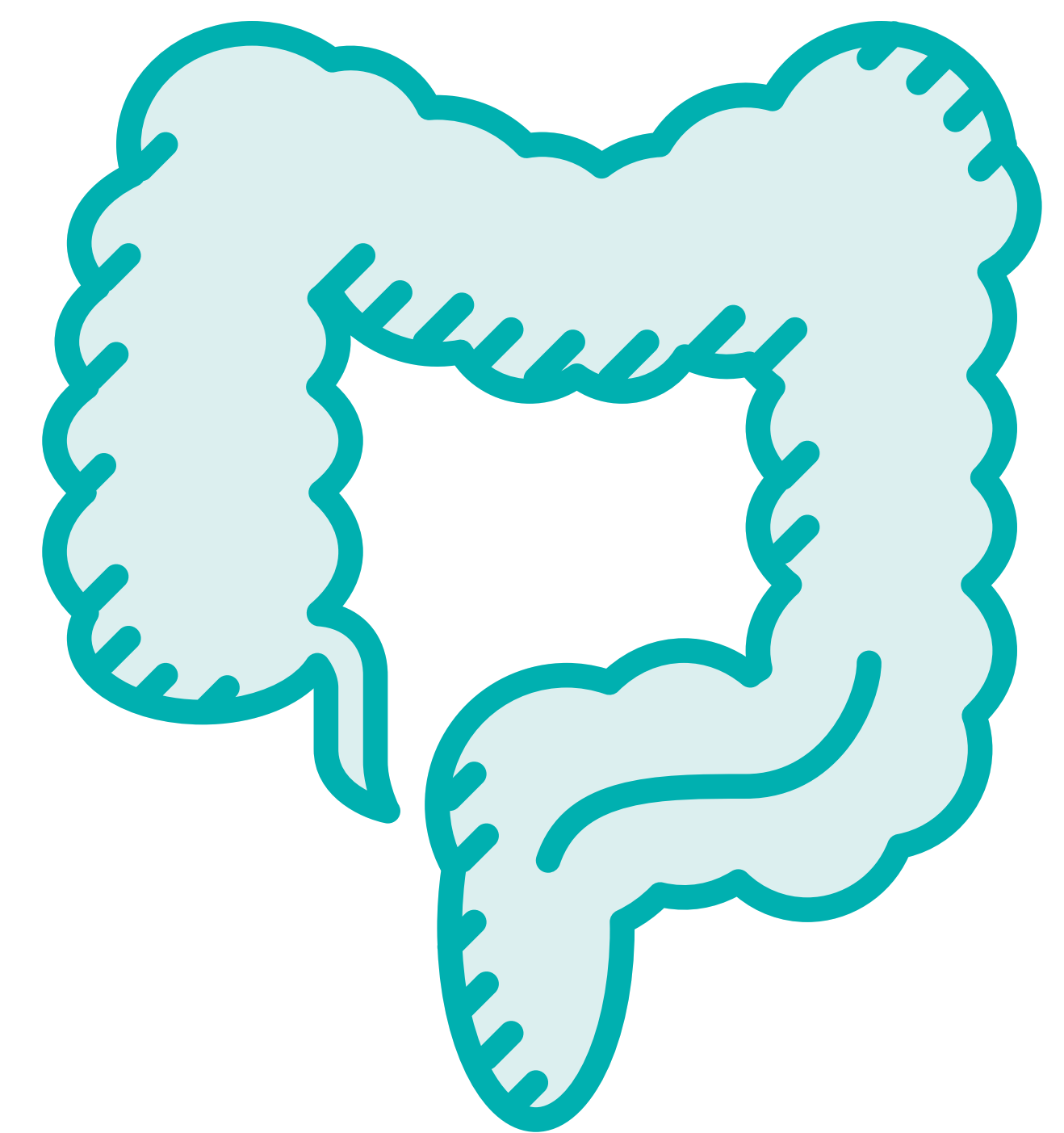
RM Partners is undertaking a research study to examine the effectiveness of the faecal immunochemical test (FIT) in ruling out bowel cancer, and to further understand factors that affect different test results for the population across London.

Background

FIT is a new user friendly 'home' stool sample test, more accurate than other tests and which has the potential to rule out colorectal cancer (CRC)

It can be used to triage people who go to their GP with gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms as well as those who are at high risk of cancer. This reduces the number of people who have surveillance colonoscopies for bowel cancer, high risk adenomas or inflammatory bowel disease.

The number of people referred through the urgent two week wait route is increasing but the proportion of cancers being detected is reducing, suggesting that the majority of colonoscopies are unnecessary. The FIT test will detect this cancer early and reduce the need for this invasive diagnostic test.



Approach

This is the only ethically-approved study which also has achieved adoption into the NIHR peer-reviewed portfolio to be run nationally. The NICE FIT research study is sponsored and led by Croydon University Hospital.

It will recruit over 5,000 patients who are on the two week wait pathway and will undergo a colonoscopy to participate. Patients use the FIT stool sample kit at home which is then sent directly to the lab for analysis. Results from the FIT test will be compared to colonoscopy findings to determine its effectiveness in predicting bowel cancer. Other clinical and demographic data such as symptoms, age, gender and postcode, are also collected.

As well as 14 London Trusts a further 12 hospital Trusts across Wessex, Kent, Surrey and Sussex are currently planning to participate in NICE FIT in 2018.

Achievements to date

As of January 2018 over 800 patients have been recruited. We are aiming to recruit over 5,000 patients by September 2018.

We have received positive peer review from members of the NCRI Colorectal Clinical Study Group, and the Screening, Prevention and Early Diagnosis (SPED) Advisory Group.

Long term goals

NHS England and NICE are using preliminary finding to influence policy and roll out. Planning is underway for the implementation of FIT in primary care, including laboratory analytics, workforce training, communication, safety netting and monitoring.

If our study is positive, FIT could:

- Rule out colorectal cancer with over 95% accuracy in patients with lower gastrointestinal symptoms.
- Avoid unnecessary colonoscopies, potentially freeing up to 40% of endoscopy capacity in overburdened Trusts.
- Significantly reduce the number of two week wait urgent referrals.
- As the test is more user friendly, we anticipate greater uptake and may see this in an increase in earlier stage diagnosis of colorectal cancer.

For more information

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