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Publication date:
2019

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Link to publication from Aalborg University

Citation for published version (APA):
Education in medicine or medical science increases odds of non-participation in National colorectal cancer screening

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Aim
To investigate non-participation in colorectal cancer screening predicted by educational level (basic school, high school/vocational or higher) and type in a large Danish sample.

Highlights
• Education in medicine or medical science is associated with higher odds of non-participation.
• Women in nursing had lower odds of non-participation, while men did not.
• Differences persisted after adjusting for other risk factors for non-participation.

Methods
Danes aged 50 through 75 is invited biennially for CRC screening by submitting a FIT-sample. 886,088 Danes were invited during 2014–2015. Logistic regression analyses were conducted, estimating odds of non-participation based on educational type and level, stratified by gender and educational length while adjusting for sociodemographic characteristics (age, marital status, income and country of origin).

Results
Among both males and females with long education, odds of non-participation were statistically significantly increased if educated within the field of medicine/medical science (OR 1.87 and 1.47) compared to individuals with a long non-health related education after full model adjustments. In females but not in males the odds were reduced in those with a long education in nursing and health care (OR 0.76) or other long health education (OR 0.78).

Conclusions
This large scale population-based study demonstrates that health education is related to screening participation. Men and women differ in the way they are affected by their health educations, but those educated in the field of medicine/medical science participate in screening less often than their peers in both genders.