Colorectal cancer screening aims to detect colorectal cancer at an early stage, when treatment is more likely to be curative. Lack of participation in such screening is a major issue in primary care practices, where nurse practitioners (NPs) often provide care. This study aimed to determine whether an educational intervention for NPs would increase their awareness of, and increase patients' participation in, colorectal cancer screening.

**AT A GLANCE**
- Colorectal cancer screening guidelines recommend four methods of screening to meet the needs of adults aged older than 50 years.
- An educational intervention focused on increasing nurse practitioner knowledge of colorectal cancer screening guidelines is feasible.
- Primary care providers play an important role in educating patients regarding colorectal cancer screening.

**KEYWORDS**
colorectal cancer; prevention and detection; screening guidelines; advanced practice

**DIGITAL OBJECT IDENTIFIER**
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Colorectal Cancer Screening

An educational intervention for nurse practitioners to increase screening awareness and participation

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Colorectal cancer continues to be the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States and the third most common cancer diagnosis in men and women (Baker et al., 2013; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2017c). In 2014, more than 139,000 people in the United States were diagnosed with colorectal cancer, and more than 51,000 died from the disease (CDC, 2017c). However, as of 2014, only 66% of U.S. adults reported being up-to-date with colorectal cancer screening (CDC, 2017a). Missed opportunities to prevent the disease, or to diagnose it prior to metastasis or its progression to a life-threatening condition, are responsible for morbidity and mortality in colorectal cancer. Research has shown a strong association between provider communication with patients about colorectal cancer screening and increased compliance with such screening (Underhill & Kiviniemi, 2012).

Accountable care organizations (ACOs) are healthcare organizations characterized by a payment and care delivery model that ties providers' reimbursement to quality metrics. In 2013, ACOs made colorectal cancer screening a quality measure in performance-based reimbursement (Kiviniemi, 2012). In 2013, the Affordable Care Act required Medicare payment and care delivery models to contact with patients regarding colorectal cancer screening and increased compliance with colorectal cancer screening guidelines, as well as in established preventive screening guidelines for other diseases. The percentage of adults aged 50–75 years who reported receiving colorectal cancer screening is generally higher in the northern states (70%) than in the southern states (60%).