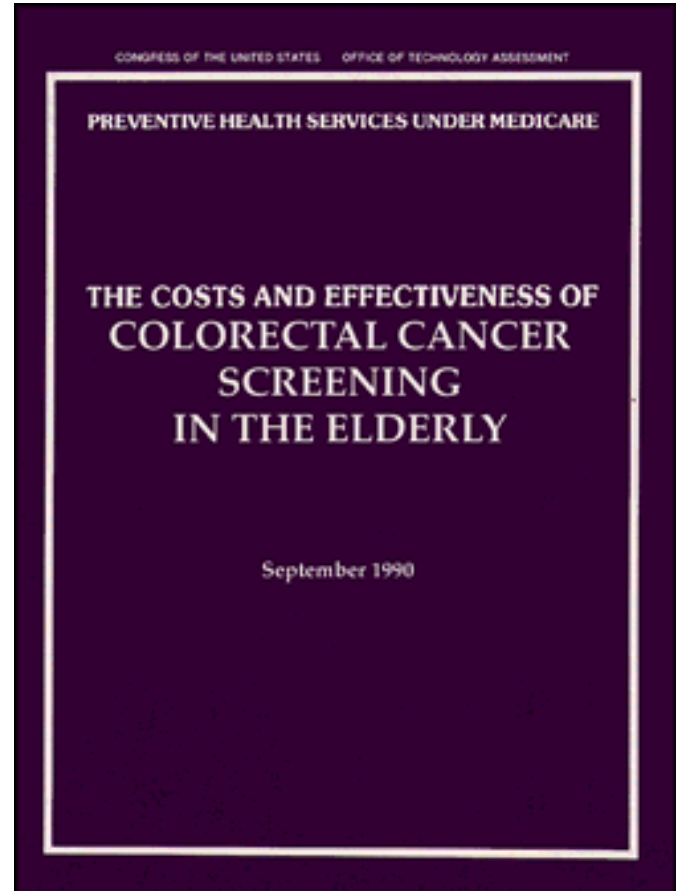


*Costs and Effectiveness of Colorectal
Cancer Screening in the Elderly*

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COSTS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING IN THE ELDERLY

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A Background Paper
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This report was prepared for desk-top publishing by Eileen Murphy and Carolyn Martin.

The views expressed in this Background Paper do not necessarily
represent those of the Technology Assessment Board,
the Technology Assessment Advisory Council,
or their individual members.

FOREWORD

Interest in health promotion and disease prevention strategies for the elderly has grown in the last 10 years, at least partly as a result of the search for ways to moderate the rising costs of health care in this growing segment of the population. Reflecting this interest, the House Committee on Ways and Means requested that OTA analyze the costs and effectiveness of providing selected preventive health services to the elderly under the Medicare program. The Senate Labor and Human Resource Committee had earlier requested that OTA provide information on the value of preventive services for the American people.

OTA responded with a study of the effectiveness and costs of four specific preventive services for the elderly: glaucoma screening; cholesterol screening; cervical cancer screening; and, in this background paper, colorectal cancer screening.

In this paper OTA summarizes the evidence on the effectiveness and costs of colorectal cancer screening in the elderly and explores the implications for Medicare of offering this preventive technology as a Medicare benefit. Nowhere are the hard choices between potential medical benefits and high costs illustrated more clearly than with this cancer screening technology.

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Director