



COMMENTARY

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Proactive Health: The Important Role of Regular Screenings in Early Disease Detection

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Description

Routine health screenings are an important part of preventative healthcare, aimed at identifying potential health issues before they become severe. These screenings play a critical role in early disease detection, significantly improving outcomes through timely intervention. By understanding the importance of these screenings, individuals can take proactive steps towards maintaining their health and preventing chronic conditions. One of the primary benefits of routine medical examinations is the first step in early detection of diseases. Many conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, often progress without noticeable symptoms until they reach an advanced stage. Through screenings, these diseases can be identified in their early stages when treatment is often more effective and less invasive.

Early detection through regular health screenings can significantly increase survival rates. For instance, the survival rate for breast cancer is significantly improved when detected early. According to the American Cancer Society, 99% of patients with locally advanced breast cancer will still be alive after five years. Similarly, early detection of colorectal cancer through screenings like colonoscopies can lead to a 90% survival rate. Preventative care through regular screenings can reduce healthcare costs in the long run. Treating diseases in their advanced stages is often more expensive than early intervention. For example, managing early-stage hypertension through lifestyle changes and medication is more cost-effective than treating the complications of untreated high blood pressure, such as stroke or heart attack.

Regular health screenings contribute to an improved quality of life by preventing the progression of diseases and reducing the need for aggressive treatments. Early detection and management of conditions like

diabetes and hypertension can prevent complications such as kidney failure, vision loss, and cardiovascular events, allowing individuals to lead healthier and more active lives.

Key screenings and their importance

Mammograms are recommended for women starting at age 40, with earlier screenings for those at higher risk. Early detection of breast cancer through mammograms can lead to more effective treatments and higher survival rates. Colonoscopies and stool tests are significant for detecting colorectal cancer early. These screenings are recommended for adults starting at age 50, with earlier looking for people who have a family history of the disease.

Pap smears and HPV tests are important for early detection of cervical cancer. Regular screenings can prevent the progression of precancerous lesions to invasive cancer. Regular blood pressure checks are essential for detecting hypertension, a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Early detection allows for lifestyle modifications and medication to control blood pressure. Screening for high cholesterol is vital in preventing cardiovascular diseases. Elevated cholesterol levels can lead to atherosclerosis, increasing the risk of heart attack and stroke. Blood Glucose Tests: Regular screening for diabetes is crucial, especially for individuals with risk factors such as obesity and a family history of diabetes. Early detection and management can prevent complications like neuropathy, retinopathy, and cardiovascular diseases. Osteoporosis screening: bone density tests are important for detecting osteoporosis, particularly in postmenopausal women and older adults. Early detection allows for interventions to strengthen bones and prevent fractures. Regular eye exams can detect conditions such as

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glaucoma, macular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy, which can lead to vision loss if untreated. Early detection of hearing loss can improve quality of life through interventions like hearing aids, preventing social isolation and cognitive decline associated with untreated hearing impairment.

Many individuals are unaware of the importance of regular health screenings or the recommended guidelines for their age and risk factors. Public health campaigns and education can raise awareness and encourage people to prioritize screenings. Access to healthcare services is a significant barrier for many individuals, particularly in underserved communities. Expanding access through community health centers, mobile clinics, and telehealth services can help overcome this barrier. The cost of health screenings can be a deterrent for some individuals. Insurance coverage for preventative services, subsidies, and free screening programs can alleviate financial burdens and encourage participation in regular screenings. Apprehension about the

screening procedure or possible results can prevent individuals from seeking regular health screenings. Providing clear information about the procedures, benefits, and follow-up care can help reduce anxiety and encourage participation.

The role of healthcare providers

Healthcare providers are instrumental in encouraging regular health screenings. Educate patients about the importance of screenings, the recommended guidelines, and the potential outcomes. Personalized recommendations based on individual risk factors can increase adherence to screening schedules. Create a supportive and non-judgmental environment that encourages patients to ask questions and express concerns. Building trust with patients can increase their willingness to participate in regular screenings. Ensure timely follow-up care for abnormal screening results. Coordinating care with specialists and providing resources for further testing and treatment can improve patient outcomes.