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Family medicine doctors' opinion about prostate cancer screening. A pilot study

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Background & Aim: The idea behind this study emerges from the controversy between the pros and cons of early detection of prostate cancer using a systematic screening method of entire population. There is no scientific clear evidence whether this last is preferable over opportunistic screening, a one directed to patients who demanded it themselves or that performed for other motives of consult. The objective is to analyze how family doctors manage screening of prostate cancer and detect their doubts and needs regarding this act.

Methods: A self-completed questionnaire was designed for general practitioners. The questionnaire contained 6 sections (sociodemographic data, clinical management, needs, interests, prostate cancer screening guidelines and suggestions) and 49 variables. The variables were scored on a scale of 1-10 (low to high). A pilot study was performed. The present study was done in accordance with the Ethics Research Committee.

Results: 17 general practitioners responded the questionnaire. 59% were females with average age of 42 years old. Their average professional experience was of 15 years. Participation was of 100%. They considered that 59% of prostate-specific antigen (PSA) requests were demanded by patients. Factors that influenced the most in requesting PSA analysis were prostate clinical presentations (8.7 points) and family history of prostate cancer (8 points). The most adequately considered interval for a new screening for PSA was of 1 year (7.7 points). Interest in having information about active surveillance of prostate cancer was rated with 8.5 points. They rated their application of guidelines with: 3.2 points (European association of urology), 2.1 points (American cancer association) and 1.3 points (National cancer comprehensive network).

Conclusions: General practitioners showed an interest in having active surveillance protocols of prostate cancer and in updated guidelines. Currently in Spain guidelines mostly applied en primary care centers is of the European association of urology.