

Is premedication needed for colonoscopy screening?

Jaroslav Regula, Eugeniusz Butruk

Department of Gastroenterology, Institute of Oncology

Roentgen Street 5, 02-781 Warsaw, Poland

Large scale, national, organized, opportunistic colorectal cancer screening program using colonoscopy as a primary screening method has been introduced in 2000 in Poland. So far, over 50 000 colonoscopies were performed in 40 endoscopic centers.

The majority (77%) of colonoscopies were performed without sedation. Method of sedation was chosen locally. The spectrum of sedation methods ranged from mild conscious sedation with drugs administered by endoscopist to deep sedation performed with the help of anesthesiologist. Usually sedation was used when the candidates for screening expressed their wish about that and when sedation was available in a given center. Women slightly more often were examined in sedation than men (24% vs. 21%).

Completion of the examination to the caecum was achieved more often in people with than without sedation (91.4% vs. 88.9%). The difference is statistically significant due to large numbers of examined people but in fact the figures differ only by 2,5%. Similar difference was detected in subgroups of women and men. Women had lower rate of complete large bowel examination with and without sedation (89.9% and 86.7) as compared to men (94.2% and 92.5%), respectively.

These figures increase significantly when we analyzed the largest (Warsaw) center where only deep sedation with the help of anesthesiologist was used in people wishing sedated colonoscopy. Sedated and unsedated completion rates were: 99.5% and 94.3% for the whole group; 99.4% and 92.8% for women; and 100% and 96.7% for men, respectively.

Similar influence of the method of sedation was observed on the patients' satisfaction grading. In the whole material the screened people were: very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat unsatisfied and very unsatisfied in a similar proportions when colonoscopy was performed in sedation or without sedation: 41.9%, 41.6%, 11.7%, 4.8% and 39.5%, 43.1%, 13.4%, 4.1%, respectively. In the center using deep sedation these values favored

significantly sedated colonoscopy with respective percentages being: 76.6%, 18.0%, 4.7%, 0.8% and 32.7%, 46.1%, 16.2%, 5.0%.

In conclusion; large scale screening colonoscopy without sedation is feasible. However, conscious mild and moderate sedation increases only slightly the completion rate to the caecum and may not improve patients' satisfaction. On the contrary, deep sedation significantly increases the completion rate and improves patients' satisfaction.