

Tolerance of Colonoscopy: Questioning Its Utility in the Elderly

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Abstract : This study was carried out from Jan '12-Dec'12 to assess current practice in Kerry General Hospital against the age-related indicators for colonoscopies. A total of 1474 colonoscopies were performed, 1177(79.9%) were diagnostic and 297 (20.1%) were therapeutic, patients were divided into 4 age groups under 75, 75-80, 81-85, 86+. The trend analysis revealed an increase in diagnostic colonoscopies and decrease in therapeutic colonoscopies with age. 664(45.04%) of colonoscopies were reported normal which made up the majority of the total diagnoses, 1330 (90.2%) of colonoscopies occurred without any complications. Main complications were patient discomfort being the highest, present in 112(7.6%) of patients, and lowest being urticaria around the IV site present in 1 (0.1%) of the cases. Patient discomfort was higher in younger patients as evidenced by 98 cases aged <75, followed by 11 cases aged 75-80, 2 cases aged 81-85 and 1 case aged >86. Highest percentage of poor tolerance was found in 14 (1.1%) of total patients <75, 1 (0.8%) of total patients aged 75-80, 1(1.7%) of total patients in age group 81-85 and none (0%) in age group >86. We have established the safety of colonoscopy, low rate of complications and a better tolerance in the elderly from this study, however, its utility, especially in the presence of other comorbidities in elderly is questionable.

Keywords : colonoscopy, elderly patients, utility, tolerance

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