

Screening and Prevention Strategies

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1. Introduction

- Screening detects disease or risk factors in apparently healthy individuals before symptoms appear.
- Prevention strategies aim to reduce disease occurrence, progression, and complications.

2. Levels of Prevention

- **Primary prevention:** prevents disease onset, e.g. vaccination and health education.
- **Secondary prevention:** early detection and treatment, e.g. screening tests.
- **Tertiary prevention:** reduces complications and disability in established disease.

3. Screening Test Properties

- **Sensitivity:** ability to correctly identify those with disease.
- **Specificity:** ability to correctly identify those without disease.
- Positive and negative predictive values depend on disease prevalence.

4. Criteria for Screening

- The condition should be important, with a detectable early stage and effective treatment.
- The test must be acceptable, safe, and cost-effective.

5. Significance

- Effective screening reduces morbidity and mortality.
- Overdiagnosis and false positives are potential harms to balance.