

Dear Thomas

Thank you for asking me to provide feedback on your recent email and article. I agree with most of your comments but I think there are a few issues that require clarification for your readers.

HealthScreen is a comprehensive state-of-the-art preventative health centre specialising in executive health but also in advanced health assessments in health-conscious individuals. It is staffed by prominent specialists in the field and our components of these assessments are included on our website: <https://www.healthscreen.com.au/exam-components/>. All these components have been scientifically validated and are currently used in health assessments and clinical medicine.

At initial consultation, which takes over an hour, the assessing physician takes detailed medical history and performs physical examination, including examination for skin cancers. All investigations are individualized depending on medical and family history. Informed consent is obtained and potential results including false positive, negative and further investigations are discussed. The patient then undertakes a number of investigations and is again reviewed by the doctor two weeks later with all results. At this consultation all investigations are discussed in detail, plan of action in terms of preventative medicine is formulated and report is provided to patient and GP to ensure continuity of care.

Let's now discuss your comments about false positive/negative results and further investigations. There are currently three screening programs in Australia – Cervical Cancer (PAP smears), Bowel Cancer Screening (FOBT) and Breast cancer (Mammography). All these programs have significant positive/negative rates and lead to further investigations including breast biopsies and colonoscopies. The benefits however outweigh the possible disadvantages. Surely you are not proposing to stop breast cancer screening just because it leads to potentially unnecessary biopsies and anxiety? The reason why there are only these three programs is related purely to cost and limited public health funds. But what about other cancers – lung cancer, pancreatic cancer, heart disease, risk of stroke? HealthScreen concept is about a one-stop shop where you can look at 20 different cancers, cardiac, stroke risk at the same time. I think there is little doubt that this is the future of Preventative Medicine. All the investigations performed are scientifically validated and many are actually recommended by the relevant professional bodies. For instance the best screening test for heart disease (and there are 43 people dying every day from heart disease in Australia) and recommended by Cardiac Society of Australia is cardiac Calcium Score. And yet this is not part of any screening programs.

Let's now talk about Cochrane review. For some reason you are referring to this as some infallible gold standard. I strongly ask you to review their articles about breast cancer screening and prostate cancer screening suggesting of no benefits and advocating no investigations. These screening tests are part of our routine tests in Australia – please mention this to a 55 year old dying from metastatic prostate cancer who unfortunately has not had screening and timely surgery. The latest article on their website is a review referring to treatment of Hepatitis C with new antiviral medication – DAA's. I have been involved in treatment of Hepatitis C over the last 30 years and these new drugs (DAA's) have revolutionized treatment leading to virtual eradication of Hepatitis C in Australia. Cochrane review found no benefit in treating patients with DAA's leading to most furious response from GE Society of Australia and yet this report is still on their website.

In terms of advertising - our website is quite clear on the comprehensive and medically supervised preventative medicine services we provide. All patients are provided with appropriate information and all concerns including potential benefits and false positives are extensively discussed. At the end of the day it is an individual informed choice. I know what I would choose!

I am passionate about Health, Preventative Medicine and Longevity. I would love to collaborate on some other articles you are planning in this area.

Best Regards David Badov