Personalized Estimates of Benefit From Preventive Care Guidelines

What is the problem and what is known about it so far?
Medical organizations recommend so many tests and procedures to screen for early disease and prevent future disease that it is not always possible to do all the tests and procedures for each person.

Why did the researchers do this particular study?
To find a better way to deliver preventive services rather than trying to do everything for every patient.

Who was studied?
The researchers compared recommendations for different hypothetical patients who were representative of the more common types of people receiving preventive services.

How was the study done?
The researchers calculated how much longer each person would live after getting a specific service and then ranked the services according to how much each service increased life expectancy.

What did the researchers find?
The rank order of services was different in people with different personal characteristics, medical conditions, and lifestyle choices.

What were the limitations of the study?
The results do not recognize that different people are more or less likely to change when tests and procedures lead to recommendations for different lifestyles and medications. These results also do not recognize differences in the quality of extended lives and other important considerations.

What are the implications of the study?
It may be possible to incorporate patient-specific priorities for screening and preventive services into routine clinical care.

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