



## Preface

Cancer screening is a prominent strategy in cancer control, yet the ability to correctly interpret cancer screening data seems to elude many researchers, clinicians, and policy makers. My initial attempt to address that problem was to develop a short course on the assessment of cancer screening that focused on methodology and data interpretation. I first taught the course during the 2015 spring semester at the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences, informally known as the National Institutes of Health Graduate School. As the semester went on, it became clear to me that my students and the larger community needed a text. I chose to call the text a primer as it covers the basics and is written as simply as possible.

The primer reflects how cancer screening is perceived and practiced in the United States. It is best suited to those familiar with biomedical research and public health practice in the US. I expect it to be of use regardless of the reader's cancer screening knowledge. Readers less familiar with the topic will want to start at the beginning and read straight through. Those with some experience may be able to read only the sections in which they are interested, or consult the primer for a formula or definition. Please note that the primer does not provide an assessment of the evidence available for or against screening for specific cancers, except as relevant for the purpose of example.

I encourage feedback and can be reached at [marcusp@mail.nih.gov](mailto:marcusp@mail.nih.gov).

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