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IARC Working Group Report on *Helicobacter pylori* screen-and-treat strategies for gastric cancer prevention

Lyon, France, 11 March 2026 – A new article published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*¹ summarizes the recommendations of an international Working Group convened by the International Agency for Research on Cancer of the World Health Organization (IARC/WHO) to provide guidance on implementation of population-based *Helicobacter pylori* screen-and-treat strategies as a means of preventing gastric cancer.

Gastric cancer remains a major global health challenge. It is the fifth leading cause of cancer death worldwide, and demographic shifts mean that the number of new cases per year will continue to increase, particularly in low- and middle-income regions.

Infection with *H. pylori* is the primary cause of gastric cancer and was classified as carcinogenic to humans by the *IARC Monographs* programme in 1994. Since then, a body of evidence has accumulated: randomized trials show that treating *H. pylori* infection reduces gastric cancer incidence by 36% and gastric cancer mortality by 22%.

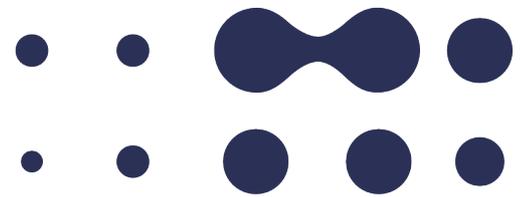
Despite this evidence, only a few countries have implemented population-level *H. pylori* screen-and-treat programmes. Lack of practical guidance on how to design such programmes, how to select appropriate test methods and treatment regimens, and how to ensure quality, equity, and responsible antibiotic use may have contributed to the slow progress in global gastric cancer prevention.

To address these needs, IARC convened 35 experts from 20 countries and territories to develop practical, globally applicable recommendations. The resulting IARC Working Group Report² is the first comprehensive framework for planning and implementing *H. pylori* screen-and-treat strategies at the population level for gastric cancer prevention.

The Working Group's recommendations cover needs assessment, selection of reliable non-invasive tests, use of locally effective treatment regimens, monitoring of antibiotic resistance, quality assurance, and approaches to optimize the cost–benefits of *H. pylori* screen-and-treat programmes for gastric cancer prevention. The

¹ Park JY, Lee Y-C, Moayyedi P, Lansdorp-Vogelaar I, Camargo MC, Tepeš B, et al. (2026). *Helicobacter pylori* screen-and-treat programs for gastric cancer prevention – IARC Working Group Report. *N Engl J Med*. Published online 11 March 2026. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMsb2515372>

² Park JY, editor (2025). Population-based *Helicobacter pylori* screen-and-treat strategies for gastric cancer prevention: guidance on implementation (IARC Working Group Reports No. 12). Lyon, France: International Agency for Research on Cancer. Available from: <https://publications.iarc.who.int/648>. Licence: CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 IGO.



Working Group Report also highlights the potential of these programmes to reduce health inequities, particularly in high-burden and resource-constrained settings by reaching populations with the highest rates of *H. pylori* infection and disease.

“The publication of this work in *The New England Journal of Medicine* marks an important step towards global action for gastric cancer prevention,” says Dr Jin Young Park, who led the IARC Working Group Report and is the leader of the Gastric Cancer Prevention Team at IARC and the first and corresponding author of the article. “We hope these summaries will serve as a practical resource for countries seeking to integrate *H. pylori* screen-and-treat strategies into their national cancer prevention strategies, thus contributing to efforts to curb the growing burden of gastric cancer.”

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The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is part of the World Health Organization. Its mission is to coordinate and conduct research on the causes of human cancer, the mechanisms of carcinogenesis, and to develop scientific strategies for cancer control. The Agency is involved in both epidemiological and laboratory research and disseminates scientific information through publications, meetings, courses, and fellowships. If you wish your name to be removed from our press release emailing list, please write to com@iarc.who.int.