



# The Impact of a Celebrity Spokesperson on Preventive Health Behavior: The Katie Couric Effect

P Cram, S Vijan, J Inadomi, ME Cowen, D Carpenter, AM Fendrick

Division of General Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine, School of Medicine; Ann Arbor Veterans Affairs Health Services Research and Development Field Program; Department of Internal Medicine, St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Ann Arbor; Consortium for Health Outcomes, Innovation, and Cost Effectiveness Studies (CHOICES)



## Context

- Celebrity endorsement is widely embraced by the business community.
- The impact of celebrity spokespersons on public health behavior has not been well studied.

## Study Objective

- To measure the impact of Katie Couric's March, 2000 colon cancer awareness campaign on colonoscopy rates in adults.

## Methods

### Data Sources:

- (1) The Clinical Outcomes Research Initiative (CORI): A voluntary national consortium of endoscopists was used as the primary data source.
- (2) A mid-western MCO with 44,000 adult members was used for validation.

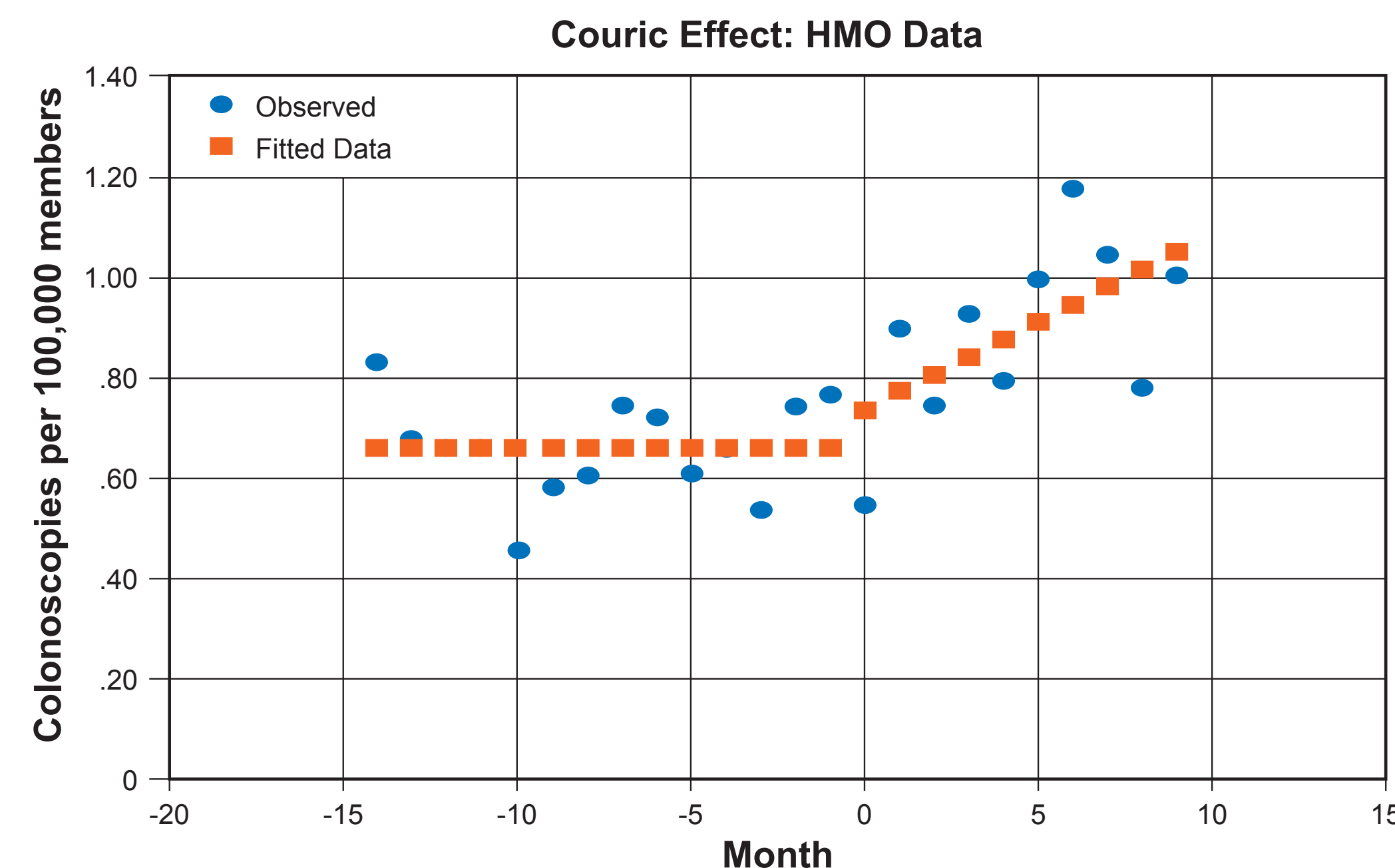
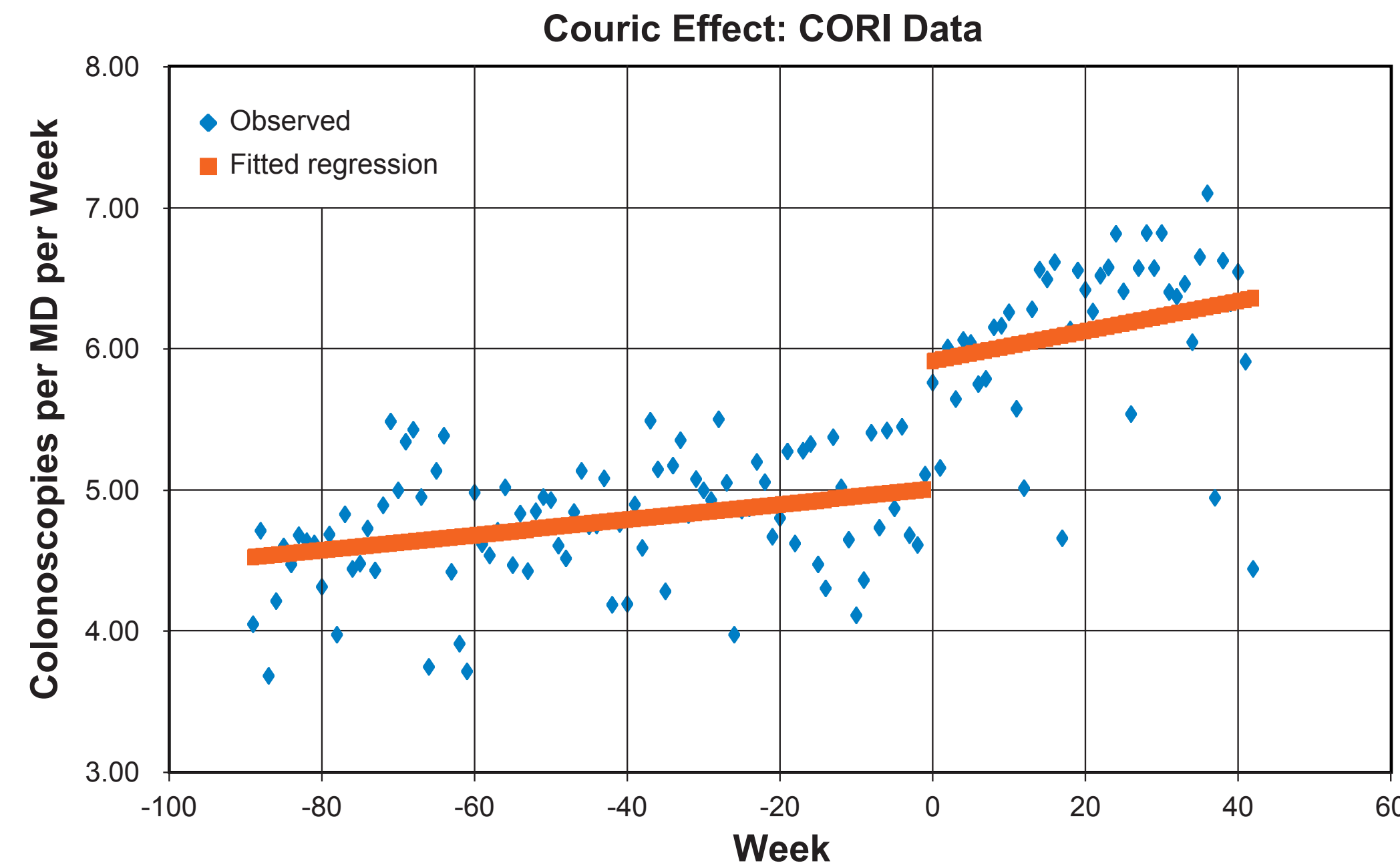
### Outcome Measures:

Mean number of colonoscopies performed, mean patient age, proportion of procedures performed on women before and after Ms. Couric's campaign were compared.

### Statistical Analysis:

Linear regression with interaction terms was used to allow for adjustment for underlying baseline trends in colonoscopy rate.

## Results



	Pre-Couric	Post-Couric	
# of Procedures Per MD per Week	4.7	6.1	p<.001
Mean age of patients	60.8	59.9	p<.001
% patients < age 50	21.6%	22.4%	p=.054
% women	43.4%	47.4%	p<.001

PSA screening rates remained constant over the study period, however mammography rates demonstrated a statistically significant decline (p<.0001) post- Couric.

## Conclusion

- Ms. Couric's colon cancer screening campaign was associated with a statistically significant increase in the use of colonoscopy in two separate data sets.
- Her campaign also coincided with a significant reduction in the average age of patients undergoing colonoscopy and a higher proportion of procedures being performed on women.
- These trends are consistent with the demographics of *Today Show* viewers who are 60% female with a median age of 47.5 years.
- Further research should evaluate whether Ms. Couric's campaign improved colonoscopy rates among those at highest risk for colorectal cancer.