



Be Clear on Cancer: Third national lung cancer awareness campaign, 2014

Caveats: This summary presents the results of the metrics on cancer diagnoses resulting from an urgent GP referral for suspected cancer and conversion rates. This is one of a series of summaries that will be produced for this campaign, each focusing on a different metric. A comprehensive interpretation about the campaign is not included here as this requires a full evaluation of all the metrics. The full evaluation will be part of the final campaign report which will be published in due course. These metrics should not be considered in isolation.

Cancer diagnoses resulting from an urgent GP referral for suspected cancer and conversion rates

The campaign

The third national lung cancer awareness campaign ran from 10 March 2014 to 30 April 2014 in England.

The campaign's key message was:

- 'Been coughing for three weeks? Tell your doctor.'

Metric: Cancer diagnoses resulting from an urgent GP referral for suspected cancer

This metric considers whether the campaign had an impact on the number of new lung cancer cases that resulted from an urgent GP referral for suspected lung cancers, often referred to as two week wait (TWW) referrals.

Metric: Conversion rates

This metric considers whether the campaign had an impact on the percentage of urgent GP referrals for suspected lung cancers resulting in a diagnosis of lung cancer (conversion rate).

Data are taken from the National Cancer Waiting Times Monitoring Data Set, provided by NHS England. Results are presented by month first seen. For both metrics, the analysis compared the campaign period August to October 2015 with August to October 2014. Lung cancer cases were defined as those with an ICD-10 diagnosis code of C33-C34, C37-C39 or C45.

Key messages

The third national lung cancer awareness campaign does not appear to have had an impact on the number of lung cancer diagnoses resulting from an urgent GP referral for suspected lung cancer.

The campaign did not impact the lung cancer conversion rate.

Results

The trend in the number of lung cancer diagnoses resulting from an urgent GP referral for suspected lung cancer was fairly consistent, with some natural monthly variation and some evidence of an increase around the time of the first national lung cancer awareness campaign, which ran in May and June 2012 (Figure 1). There was a 4.9% increase in the overall number of lung cancer diagnoses resulting from an urgent GP referral for suspected lung cancer in England between March to May 2013 and March to May 2014; this increase was not statistically significant.

Figure 1: Monthly number of lung cancer diagnoses resulting from an urgent GP referral for suspected lung cancer from January 2012 to May 2014, England

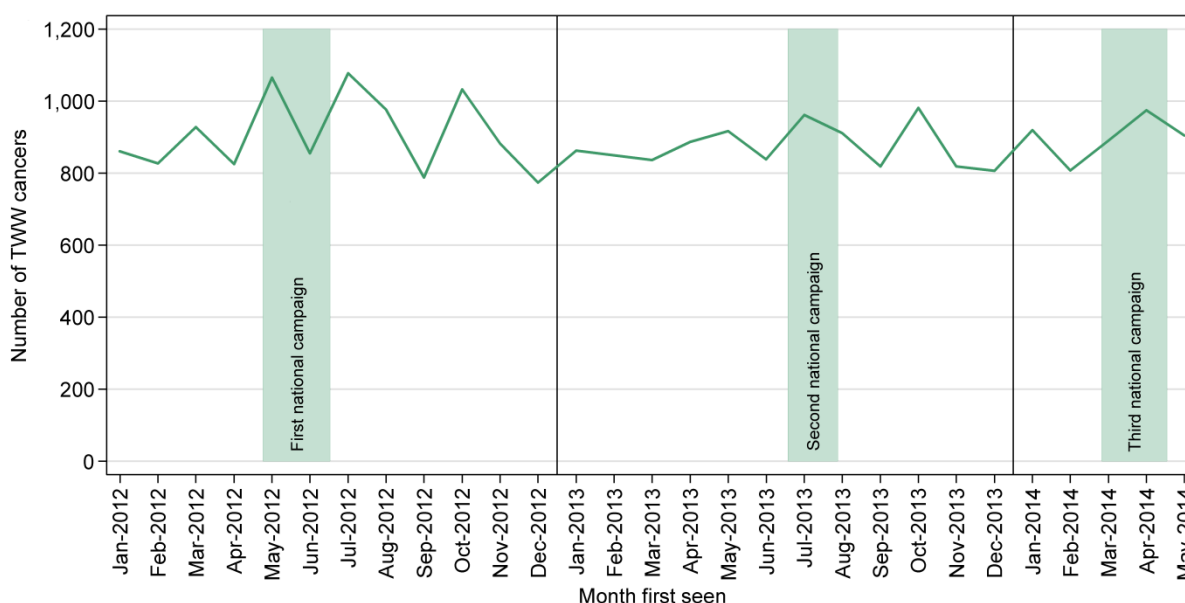
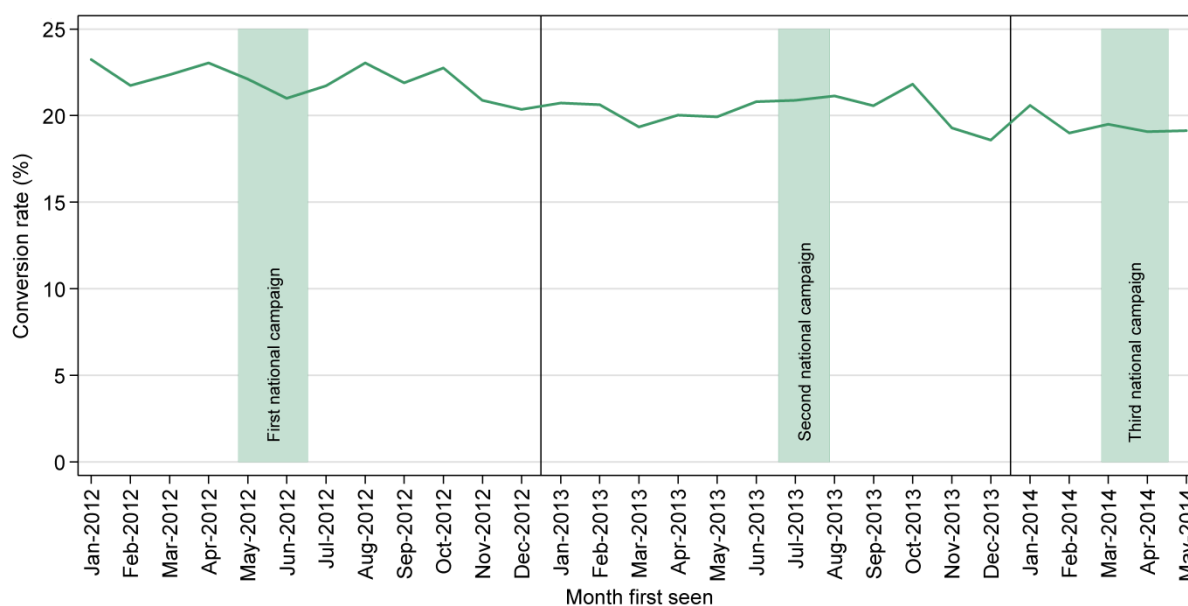


Figure 2: Monthly conversion rate for urgent GP referrals for suspected lung cancer, January 2012 to May 2014, England



From January 2011 to May 2014, there was a decreasing trend in the conversion rate for England (Figure 2). When the campaign period (March to May 2014) was compared to the same three months in 2013, there was no statistically significant change, with the small decrease observed over the period reflecting the longer-term trend.

Conclusions

The third national lung cancer awareness campaign does not appear to have had an impact on the number of lung cancer diagnoses resulting from an urgent GP referral for suspected lung cancer. The campaign did not have an impact on the lung cancer conversion rate.

Other metrics being evaluated include emergency presentations, urgent GP referrals for suspected cancer, detection rates, numbers of cancers diagnosed, stage at diagnosis and one-year survival. A full evaluation report will be published on the campaign metrics when all of the results are available.

Considerations

In general, cancer incidence is increasing which may have an impact on trends over time for this and other metrics; the results must be considered with these underlying trends in mind.

Where the results are statistically significant there is some evidence for an impact of the campaign, although underlying trends and other external factors (eg other awareness activities, changing referral guidance) may also affect the results.

Campaigns are more likely to have a greater impact on metrics relating to patient behaviour (eg symptom awareness and GP attendance with relevant symptoms) and use of the healthcare system (eg urgent GP referrals for suspected cancer), compared to disease metrics (eg incidence, stage at diagnosis, and survival).

Find out more about Be Clear on Cancer at:
www.ncin.org.uk/be_clear_on_cancer
www.nhs.uk/be-clear-on-cancer