



Be Clear on Cancer: Second national lung cancer awareness campaign, 2013

Caveats: This summary presents the results of the metric on urgent GP referrals for suspected cancer. This is one of a series of metric 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.

Urgent GP referrals for suspected cancer

The campaign

The second national lung cancer awareness campaign ran from 2 July 2013 to 11 August 2013 in England.

The campaign's key message was:

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

Key messages

The second national lung cancer awareness campaign appears to have resulted in a small increase in the number of urgent GP referrals for suspected lung cancer.

Metric: Urgent GP referrals for suspected cancer

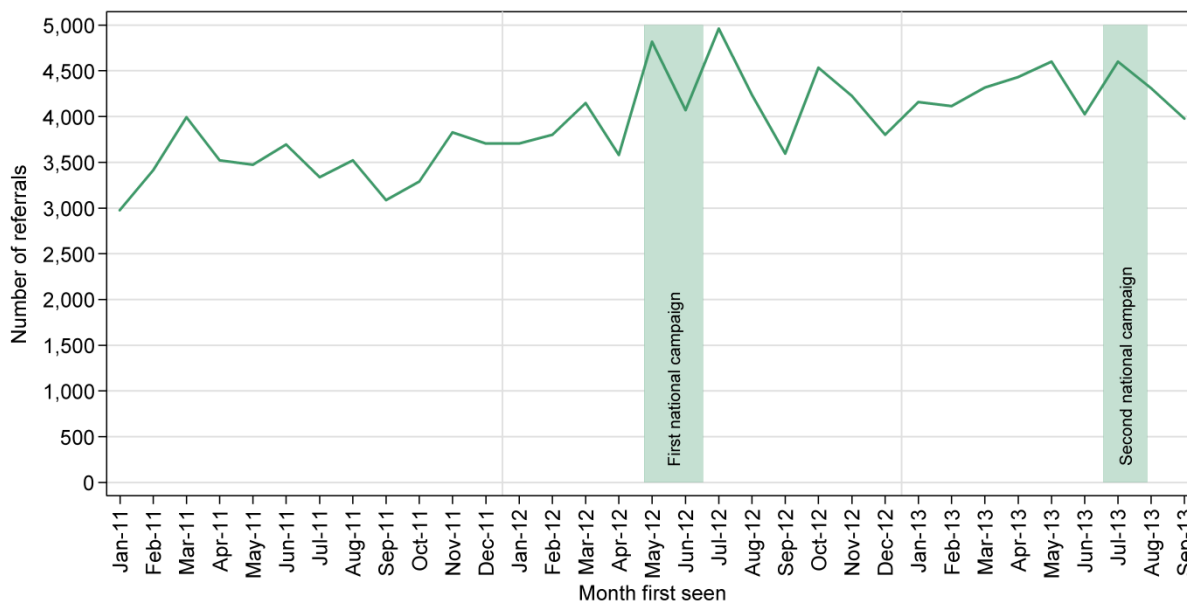
This metric considers whether the second national lung cancer awareness campaign had an impact on the number of urgent referrals for suspected lung cancer, often referred to as two week wait (TWW) referrals. It uses data from the National Cancer Waiting Times Monitoring Data Set, provided by NHS England, presented by month first seen. The analysis compares the period of and immediately following the campaign (July to September 2013) with the same three months in 2011.

Results

Nationally, there were 30% more urgent GP referrals for suspected lung cancer in July to September 2013 than in July to September 2011 (Figure 1). However, there was also a large increase in referrals for all suspected cancers (excluding lung and lower GI cancers), with a 26% increase in referrals over the same period. This suggests that the campaign resulted in a small additional increase in referrals for suspected lung cancer.

The number of referrals increased for both males (26%) and females (35%), as well as for all age groups; ranging from 25% for those 60-69 to 42% for those aged 50-59.

Figure 1: Monthly number of urgent GP referrals for suspected lung cancer, January 2011 to September 2013, England



Conclusions

The second national lung cancer awareness campaign appears to have led to a modest increase in the number of urgent GP referrals for suspected lung cancer. There were 30% more suspected lung cancer referrals in July to September 2013 than in July to September 2011, compared with 26% more referrals for all suspected cancers (excluding lung and lower GI cancers).

Other metrics being evaluated include emergency presentations, conversion and 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