



Be Clear on Cancer: Second national breast cancer in women over 70 campaign, 2015

Caveats: This summary presents the results of the metric on early stage at diagnosis. 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.

Early stage at diagnosis

The campaign

The second national breast cancer in women over 70 campaign ran from 13 July 2015 to 6 September 2015 in England.

Two key messages were promoted:

- 'One in three women who get breast cancer are over 70, so don't assume you're past it.'
- 'A lump isn't the only sign of breast cancer. If you're worried about any changes to your breasts, tell your doctor straight away.'

Metric: early stage at diagnosis

This metric considers whether the second national breast campaign had an impact on the proportion of breast cancer (ICD-10 C50) diagnosed at an early stage of 1 or 2 in women aged 70 and over.

Data was extracted from the national cancer analysis system for the diagnosis period March 2014 to February 2016. The analysis period was defined as two weeks after the start of the campaign (week 31 of 2015) to two months after the end of the campaign (week 46 of 2015). The proportion of early staged cases per week during the analysis period was compared with the overall median for March 2015 to February 2016. The campaign was considered to have a possible impact if a) the proportion per week was the same or higher than the median for five or more consecutive weeks and b) this sustained period started during analysis the period.

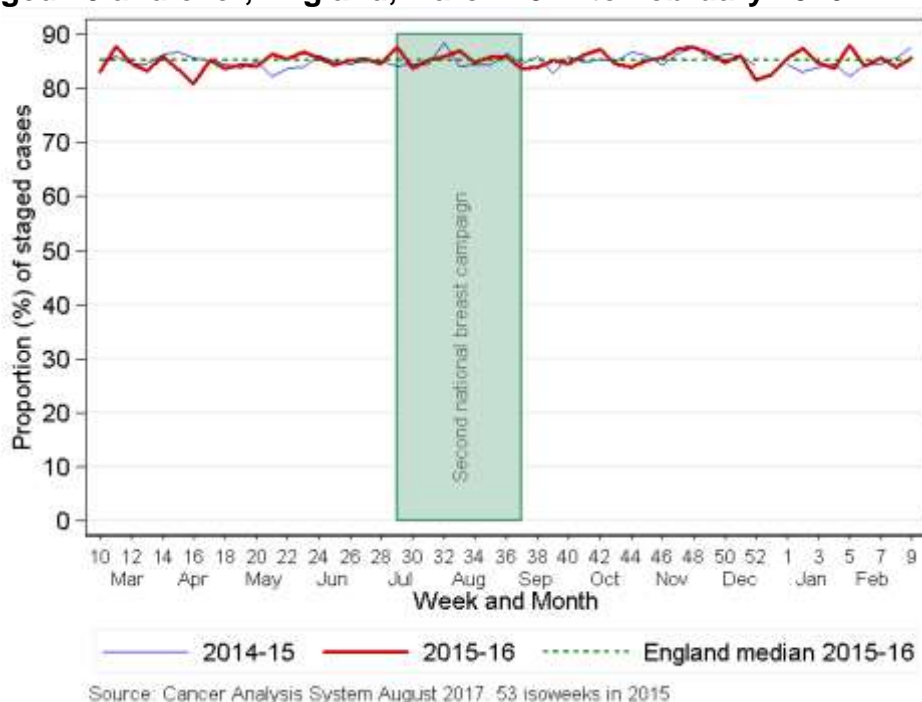
Results

There were no sustained periods where the proportion of breast cancer diagnosed at an early stage was higher than the 2015 to 2016 median during the analysis period (Figure 1).

Key messages

The second national breast campaign did not appear to have an impact on the proportion of breast cancer diagnosed at an early stage in women aged 70 and over.

Figure 1: Proportion of breast cancer diagnosed at stage 1 or 2 by week, women aged 70 and over, England, March 2014 to February 2016.



Conclusions

The second national breast campaign did not appear to have an impact on the proportion of breast cancer diagnosed at an early stage in women aged 70 and over.

Other metrics being evaluated include GP attendance, urgent GP referrals, conversion and detection rate, emergency presentations 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, and so the results must be considered with these underlying trends in mind.

This metric looks at the proportion of diagnoses at stage 1 or 2 out of the total number of diagnoses. If the overall proportion of diagnoses with known stage is low, this metric would show a low proportion of diagnoses at stage 1 or 2. If more diagnoses are recorded with known stage, the proportion of diagnoses at stage 1 or 2 will improve. The proportion of cancer diagnoses with a known stage in England in 2013, 2014 and 2015 was 71%, 77% and 80% respectively, reflecting improved staging completeness; this metric may therefore represent data improvement.

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