Public Health England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Be Clear on Cancer: Regional ovarian cancer campaign, 2014

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

A regional ovarian campaign ran from 10 February 2014 to 16 March 2014 in the North West of England (Merseyside & Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and South Cumbria).

The campaign's key message was:
- 'Feeling bloated, most days, for three weeks or more could be a sign of ovarian cancer. Tell your doctor.'

Key messages

The regional ovarian campaign does not appear to have had an impact on the proportion of ovarian cancer diagnosed at an early stage in the regional pilot area.

## Metric: early stage at diagnosis

This metric considers whether the regional ovarian cancer campaign had an impact on the proportion of ovarian cancer (ICD-10 C48 excluding sarcoma, C56–57) diagnosed at an early stage of 1 or 2, for women of all ages resident the North West regional pilot area.

Data was extracted from the national cancer analysis system for the diagnosis period October 2012 to September 2014. The analysis period was defined as two weeks after the start of the campaign (week 9 of 2014) to two months after the end of the campaign (week 21 of 2014). The proportion of early staged cases per week during the analysis period was compared with the overall median proportion for October 2013 to September 2014. 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 the analysis period.

Results

During the analysis period, there were no sustained periods where the proportion of early stage ovarian cancer was the same as or higher than the 2013 to 2014 median (Figure 1).

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Figure 1: Proportion of ovarian cancer diagnosed at stage 1 or 2 by week, North of England, October 2012 to September 2014, all ages
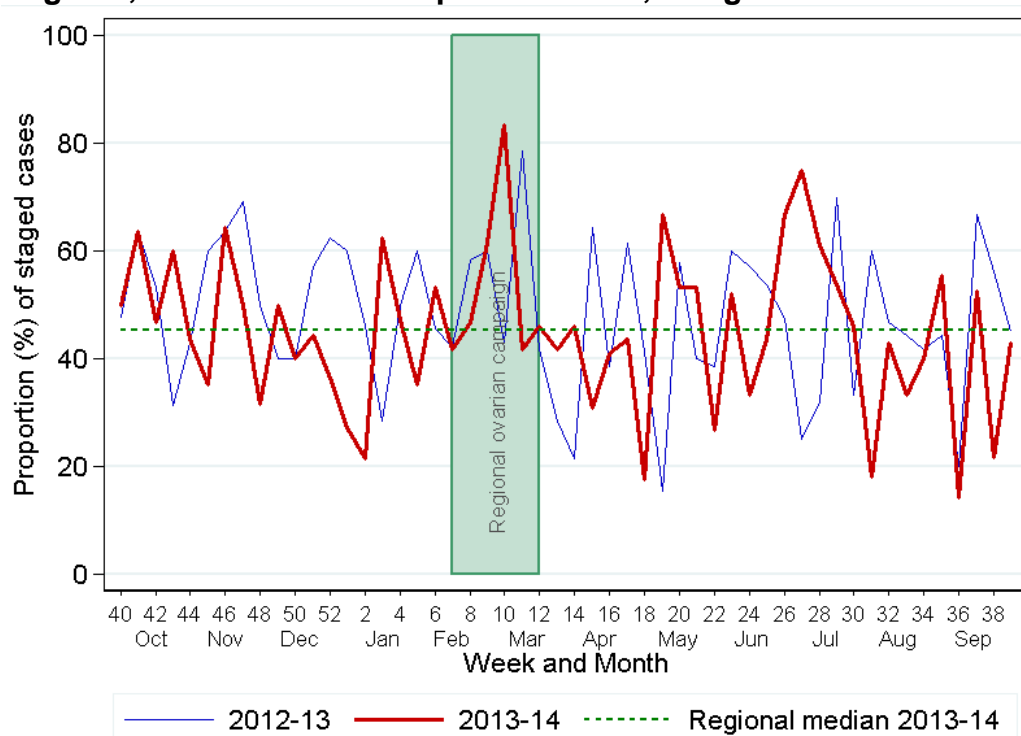
Source : Cancer Analysis System February 2016

Conclusions

The regional ovarian campaign does not appear to have had an impact on the proportion of ovarian cancer diagnosed at an early stage in the regional pilot area.

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