



Be Clear on Cancer: Local skin 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 local skin cancer campaign ran from 16 June 2014 to 27 July 2014 in parts of the South West Strategic Clinical Network (SCN): Devon, Somerset and Cornwall.

The campaign's key message was:

- 'A change to a mole isn't the only sign of skin cancer – if you notice any unusual or persistent changes to your skin go to your doctor.'

Metric: early stage at diagnosis

This metric considers whether the local skin cancer campaign had an impact on the proportion of skin cancer (ICD-10 C43) diagnosed at an early stage of 1 or 2, for men and women of all ages resident in the South West SCN.

Data was extracted from the national cancer analysis system for the diagnosis period February 2013 to January 2015. The analysis period was defined as two weeks after the start of the campaign (week 27 of 2014) to two months after the end of the campaign (week 39 of 2014). The proportion of early staged cases per week in the analysis period was compared with the overall median for February 2014 to January 2015. 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.

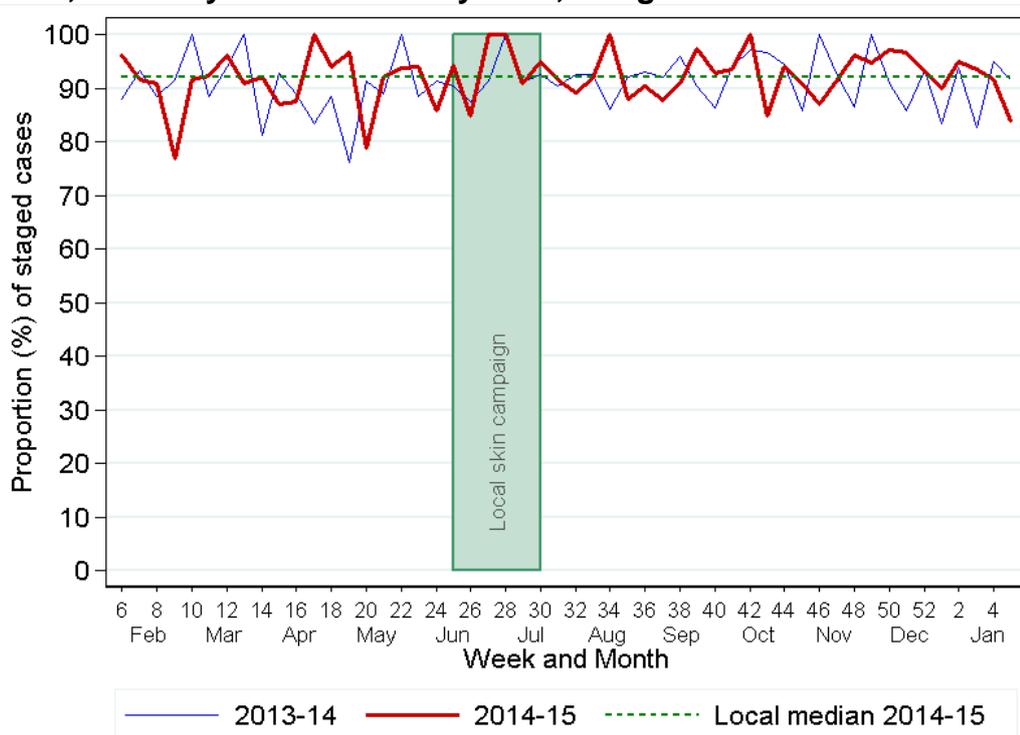
Results

There were no sustained periods where the proportion of early stage skin cancer was the same as or higher than 2014 to 2015 median (Figure 1).

Key messages

The local skin cancer campaign did not appear to have had an impact on the proportion of skin cancer diagnosed at an early stage in the local pilot area.

Figure 1: Proportion of skin cancer diagnosed at stage 1 or 2 by week, South West SCN, February 2013 to January 2015, all ages



Source : Cancer Analysis System February 2016

Conclusions

The local skin campaign did not appear to have had an impact on the proportions of skin cancer diagnosed at an early stage in the local 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 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