



Be Clear on Cancer: First national respiratory symptoms campaign, 2016

Caveats: This summary presents the results of the metric on cancers diagnosed. 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 of each campaign is published as a final report incorporating the results of all the metrics. These metrics should not be considered in isolation.

Cancers diagnosed

The campaign

The first national respiratory symptoms campaign ran from 14 July 2016 to 16 October 2016 in England.

Core campaign messages were:

- 'If you've had a cough for 3 weeks or more, it could be a sign of lung disease, including cancer. Finding it early makes it more treatable. So don't ignore it, tell your doctor'.
- 'If you get out of breath doing things you used to be able to do, it could be a sign of lung or heart disease, or even cancer. Finding it early makes it more treatable. So don't ignore it, tell your doctor'.

Metric: Cancers diagnosed

This metric considers whether the first respiratory symptoms campaign had an impact on the number of newly diagnosed cases of lung cancer (ICD-10 C33-34), for men and women aged 50 and over, and for all ages combined.

Data was extracted from the national cancer analysis system for the diagnosis period April 2015 to March 2017. The analysis period was defined as 2 weeks after the start of the campaign (week 30 of 2016) to 2 months after the end of the campaign (week 50 of 2016). The numbers of cases diagnosed per week in the analysis period were compared with the overall median for April 2016 to March 2017. The campaign was considered to have a possible impact if a) the numbers of cases per week were the same or higher than the median for 5 or more consecutive weeks and b) this sustained period started during the analysis period.

Results

For those aged 50 and over and for all ages combined, there was a 5 week period, weeks 38 to 42, where the weekly numbers of lung cancers diagnosed were higher than

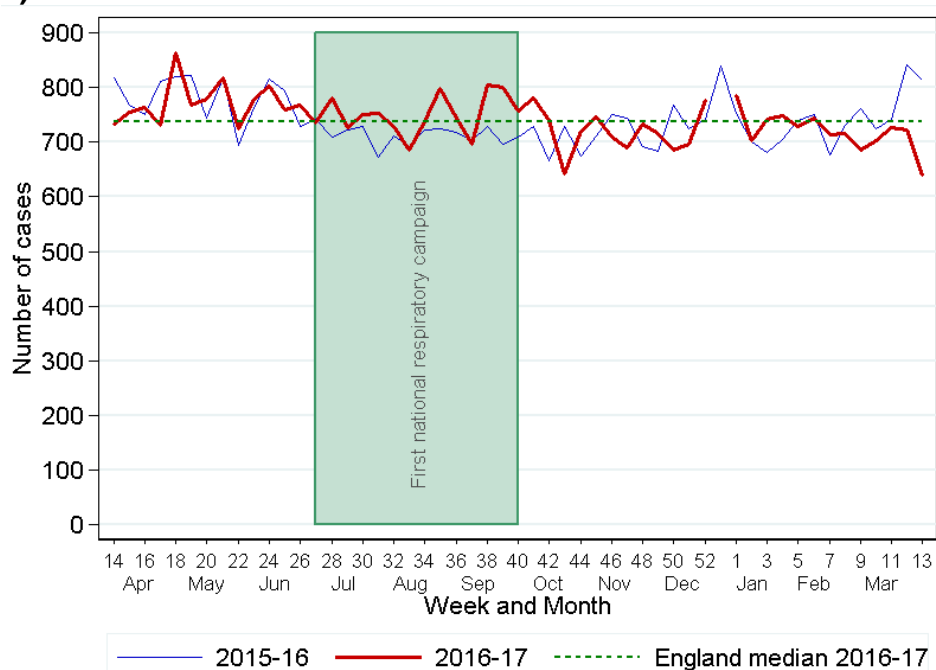
Key messages

The first national respiratory symptoms campaign appears to have had an impact on the numbers of lung cancers diagnosed for persons aged 50 and over, and for all ages combined.

the 2016 to 2017 median (figure 1). During this 5 week period, for those aged 50 and over, an additional 198 cases were diagnosed compared to the expected number based on the median (3,685 cases). For all ages combined, an additional 215 cases were diagnosed compared to the expected number based on the median (3,775 cases).

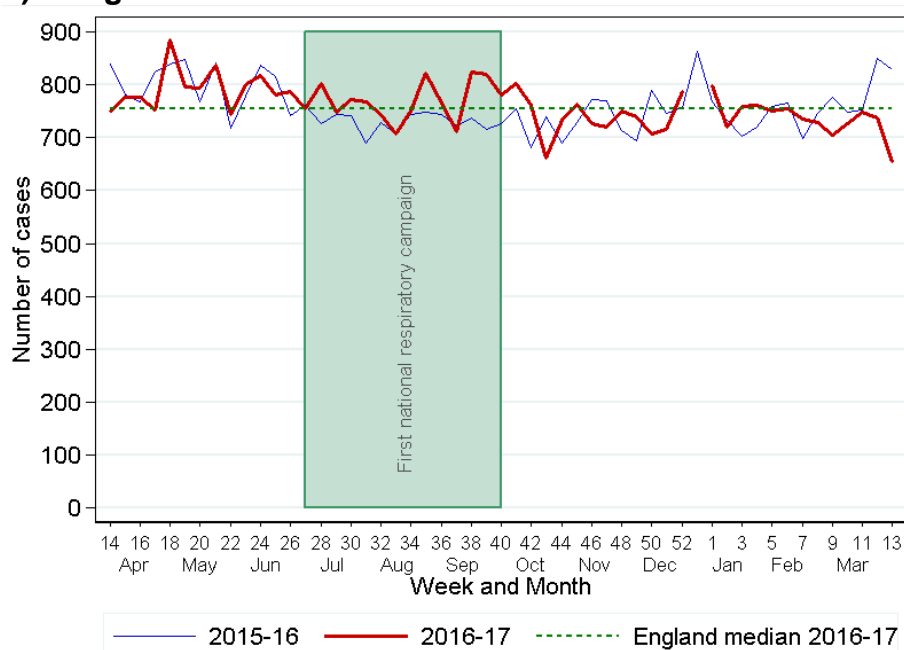
Figure 1: Number of newly diagnosed cases of lung cancer by week, England, April 2015 to March 2017, a) 50 and over and b) all ages

a) 50 and over



Source : Cancer Analysis System April 2018

b) all ages



Source : Cancer Analysis System April 2018

Conclusions

The first national respiratory symptoms campaign appears to have had an impact on the numbers of lung cancers diagnosed for persons aged 50 and over, and for all ages combined.

Other metrics being evaluated include GP attendance, urgent GP referrals, conversion and detection rate, emergency presentations and one-year survival.

Considerations

In general, cancer incidence is increasing which may have an impact on trends over time for this and other metrics. So 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 (for example 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 (for example symptom awareness and GP attendance with relevant symptoms) and use of the healthcare system (for example urgent GP referrals for suspected cancer), compared to disease metrics (for example 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