Afternoon session 2: Cancer site-specific analyses

15:05 - WHAT DO PATIENTS WITH PROSTATE CANCER DIE OF? AN ANALYSIS OF 50,000 CASES FROM THE THAMES CANCER REGISTRY.

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Objectives
Prostate cancer incidence has increased rapidly in the last 20 years but mortality rates have remained relatively constant. It is often stated that 'prostate cancer patients are more likely to die with rather than of their disease'. We have examined causes of death in a UK cohort of prostate cancer patients.

Methods
We analysed data on 50,066 men with prostate cancer diagnosis between 1997 and 2006 reported to the Thames Cancer Registry (TCR). Subjects were followed up to the end of 2007. Uptake of PSA screening was low in the UK during the studied period. We examined the relation between cause of death and patient characteristics at diagnosis: age, cancer stage, and first treatment (within six months of diagnosis).

Results
20,181 deaths occurred during the period, 49.7% recorded as being due to prostate cancer, 11.8% to other cancers, 17.8% to cardiovascular disease, 7.5% to pneumonia and 13.2% to other causes. Irrespective of subgroup defined by age, cancer stage, or first treatment, prostate cancer was an important cause of death varying from 31.6% of all deaths in men undergoing radical prostatectomy to 74.3% of all deaths in men with stage IV disease at diagnosis. The corresponding figure was 46.4% for men 75 and over.

Conclusions
Prostate cancer was the underlying cause of death in a substantial proportion of men dying in a UK cohort diagnosed from 1997 to 2006, and remained an important cause of death in all subgroups including those treated with curative intent and in older men. For men with prostate cancer diagnosed in a setting where uptake of PSA screening is low, our findings challenge the notion that prostate cancer is a negligible problem in any subgroup as defined by age, stage or treatment.