

PRESS RELEASE

Monday 2 November, 2015

QUARTER OF LONDONERS DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER AT A&E ARE DEAD WITHIN TWO MONTHS

A QUARTER of patients diagnosed with cancer after going to London A&E departments will have died within two months, according to research presented at the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference in Liverpool today (Monday).

Researchers based at London Cancer* measured the survival of nearly 1,000 patients diagnosed following emergency presentation at 12 A&E departments across north east and central London and west Essex during 2013. Patients diagnosed through emergency routes tend to have more advanced cancers, which contributes to a poorer prognosis.

The researchers found that average** survival was less than six months, with only 36 per cent of patients surviving beyond one year.

Half of all patients under the age of 65 had died by 14 months from diagnosis, with 55 per cent surviving beyond one year. For 65 - 75 year olds, half had died by five months and only 25 per cent made it past one year. And, for patients aged over 75, half had died after just three months, with only a quarter surviving past one year.

Study author, Professor Kathy Pritchard-Jones, said: "These shocking figures hammer home what we already know to be true: early diagnosis can make all the difference in your chances of surviving cancer.

"Around a quarter of all cancer cases are being diagnosed following presentation in A&E and the vast majority of these are already at a late stage, when treatment options are limited and survival is poorer. And many of the patients diagnosed through A&E have other health conditions that may complicate their treatment.

"We need to find ways to diagnose patients earlier, and through managed pathways. This is crucial to improving the UK's cancer survival to the standard of comparable countries."

Professor Charles Swanton, chair of the 2015 NCRI Cancer Conference, said: "England's one-year survival is poorer than comparable countries and one reason may be that we're diagnosing too many cancers at a late stage. We need to make sure that more patients are diagnosed earlier, when more treatment options are available and they are more effective.

"We know that emergency presentation is an issue across the country – not just in London – and this has to change if we're going to achieve world-class cancer survival in the UK."

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Notes to Editors:

Abstract details: <http://abstracts.ncri.org.uk/abstract/survival-of-cancer-presenting-through-ae-affected-by-age-cancer-and-treatment-intent-findings-from-the-london-cancer-ae-audit-2/>

* London Cancer is the integrated cancer system for hospitals in north east and central London and west Essex.

** The average was calculated using median survival, which is the amount of time which passes before half of the patients in the group that is being studied have died. Data was collected between January and August 2013. The most common cancers diagnosed in A&E were lung, bowel and hepatopancreatobiliary (HPB) cancers.

About the NCRI

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) was established in 2001. It is a UK-wide partnership between cancer research funders which promotes collaboration in the field. Its member organisations work together to maximise the value and benefits of cancer research for patients and the public.

NCRI members are: Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Bloodwise (formerly Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research); Breast Cancer Now; Cancer Research UK; Children with Cancer UK, Department of Health; Economic and Social Research Council; Macmillan Cancer Support; Marie Curie; Medical Research Council; Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Public Health Agency (Research & Development Department); Prostate Cancer UK; Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation; Scottish Government Health Directorates (Chief Scientist Office); Tenovus Cancer Care; The Wellcome Trust; Welsh Assembly Government (Health and Care Research Wales); and Worldwide Cancer Research (formerly AICR).

For more information visit www.ncri.org.uk

About the NCRI Cancer Conference

The NCRI Cancer Conference is the UK's major forum for showcasing the best British and international cancer research.

- The Conference offers unique opportunities for networking and sharing knowledge by bringing together world-leading experts from all cancer research disciplines.
- The NCRI Cancer Conference is taking place from 1–4 November 2015 at the BT Convention Centre in Liverpool.
- For more information visit conference.ncri.org.uk



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