

**FINAL DRAFT**

**Strict Embargo: 00:01hrs**

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## **NEARLY 10 PER CENT OF BOWEL CANCER PATIENTS DIE WITHIN A MONTH OF DIAGNOSIS**

Almost 10 per cent of bowel cancer patients die within a month of being diagnosed according to new analysis by the National Cancer Intelligence Network (NCIN), published today\* (Monday).

And, of those dying within a month, over half (56 per cent) were over 80 years old and 60 per cent were diagnosed following an emergency admission to hospital.

Researchers from the University of Leeds and the Hull York Medical School collaborated with the Northern and Yorkshire Cancer Registry and Information Service (NYCRIS), and looked at the data of all bowel cancer patients diagnosed in England between 2006 and 2008.

During these three years, 91,980 people were diagnosed with bowel cancer and around 9,000 died\*\* within one month.

Eva Morris, a study author from the University of Leeds, said: "Compared to elsewhere in Europe our survival rates are poor and, as this study shows, one of the key reasons is because a large number of patients present with rapidly fatal disease. And, crucially, the report highlights that these people tend to first be seen as an emergency patient in hospital and have advanced disease and can't be offered treatment that could potentially cure them.

"But, there is a problem of older patients being more likely to die quickly after a bowel cancer diagnosis."

Mick Peake, chief clinician at the National Cancer Intelligence Network (NCIN), said: "This new analysis shows just how important it is to spot the early signs of cancer. It suggests that the public, especially the elderly, may not be aware of the diseases' warning signs or they don't want to bother their doctor with possible symptoms and so are being diagnosed at a late stage in the course of their illness. Increasing awareness of the symptoms of the disease

and diagnosing patients at an early stage is vital if we are to improve survival from the disease.”

Chris Carrigan, head of the NCIN, said: “We need to ensure that the public are aware of the early signs of bowel cancer like having blood in your poo or loose poo for more than three weeks. We must also try and break down any barriers preventing people going to their GP when they have these symptoms.

“And bowel screening is routinely offered to men and women aged 60-69 every two years and evidence is showing that it is very effective at diagnosing cancers at an early stage.

That is why routine invitations are being extended to men and women aged up to 75. Those above the age limit can self refer every two years. ”

ENDS

**For media enquiries please contact Angela Balakrishnan in the NCIN press office on 020 7061 8300 or, out-of-hours, the duty press officer on 07050 264 059.**

**Notes to Editors:**

\*The analyses included in the data briefing were undertaken by a team of researchers from the Cancer Epidemiology Group at the University of Leeds and the Hull York Medical School working in collaboration with the Northern and Yorkshire Cancer Registry & Information Service

To view the work click here

[http://ncin.org.uk/publications/data\\_briefings/the\\_characteristics\\_of\\_individuals\\_with\\_colorectal\\_cancer\\_who\\_die\\_rapidly\\_from\\_their\\_disease.aspx](http://ncin.org.uk/publications/data_briefings/the_characteristics_of_individuals_with_colorectal_cancer_who_die_rapidly_from_their_disease.aspx)

\*\*Individuals may have died from cancer or from other diseases but this could not be determined in this analysis.

Bowel screening was rolled out in England in 2006 for men and women aged 60 to 69.

Screening is now offered to men and women from ages 60 to 74 in England. A kit is sent out to people every two years.

In Scotland men and women aged between 50 and 74 years are sent a FOBt kit every 2 years.

In Wales the NHS is sending out stool testing kits to people between the ages of 60 and 69 every two years. They hope to roll the service out to people aged between 50 and 74 by 2015.

The UK government has committed to adding the Flexi-Scope test bowel screening test from next year in England. The new test uses a camera and light at the end of a flexible tube to detect and remove pre-cancerous growths from the lower parts of the bowel.

### **About the National Cancer Intelligence Network (NCIN)**

- The NCIN was established in June 2008 and its remit is to coordinate the collection, analysis and publication of comparative national statistics on diagnosis, treatment and outcomes for all types of cancer
- As part of the National Cancer Research Institute, the NCIN aims to promote efficient and effective data collection at each stage of the cancer journey
- Patient care will be monitored by the NCIN through expert analyses of up-to-date statistics
- The NCIN will drive improvements in the standards of care and clinical outcomes through exploiting data
- The NCIN will support audit and research programmes by providing cancer information
- Visit [www.ncin.org.uk](http://www.ncin.org.uk) for more information