



Is the number of cancer recorded as unspecified type higher in the elderly in London than England?

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BACKGROUND

It is not always possible to register the anatomic origin of cancer, and when it occurs such cases are recorded as cancer with unspecified type.

This study aims to:

- Establish whether there are more cancers registered with unspecified type recorded in the over 75s than those aged 0-74.
- Find out whether there are more unspecified cases and deaths in women than in men in both London and England.
- Establish whether there are more unspecified cases and deaths in England than in London.

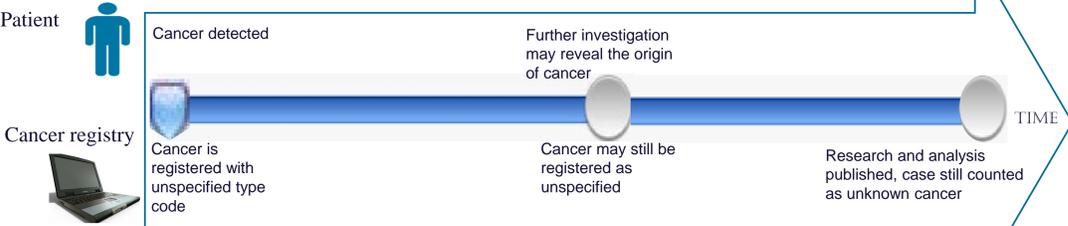


Figure 1: Schematic showing how cancer may be registered as unspecified type

Figure 1 shows how a patients may be recorded with cancer of unspecified type:

- At the time of detection, the origin of cancer has not been established. This case gets recorded at a registry as unspecified type.
- Further down the timeline, other investigation determine the origins of the cancer.
- However, there is a delay between this new information being discovered and the registry updating the case files.
- Some unspecified cases may simply have been reported poorly to the cancer registry.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data on incidence and mortality of cancer registrations with unspecified type for males and females in London and England were extracted from the UK Cancer Information Service for the period of diagnosis between 1993 and 2010 and deaths registered between 2001 and 2011. The UK Cancer Information Service (UK-CIS) contains cancer incidence, mortality and survival data for local government and health geographies, individual and common groupings of all cancer types, numbers, age-standardised rates and cancer age-sex profiles.

The data were categorised by three broad age groups; 0-74, over 75s and all ages combined. Trends in incidence and mortality for males and females in London and England were plotted in line charts. 2010 incidence data and 2011 death data were plotted as bar graphs. Proportions of incidence and death out of all cancers in London and England were shown in tables 1 and 2 respectively.

In 2010...

3 in every **100** recorded cancer cases were registered with unspecified type in England

In 2011...

7 of every **100** recorded cancer deaths were certified with unspecified type in England

RESULTS

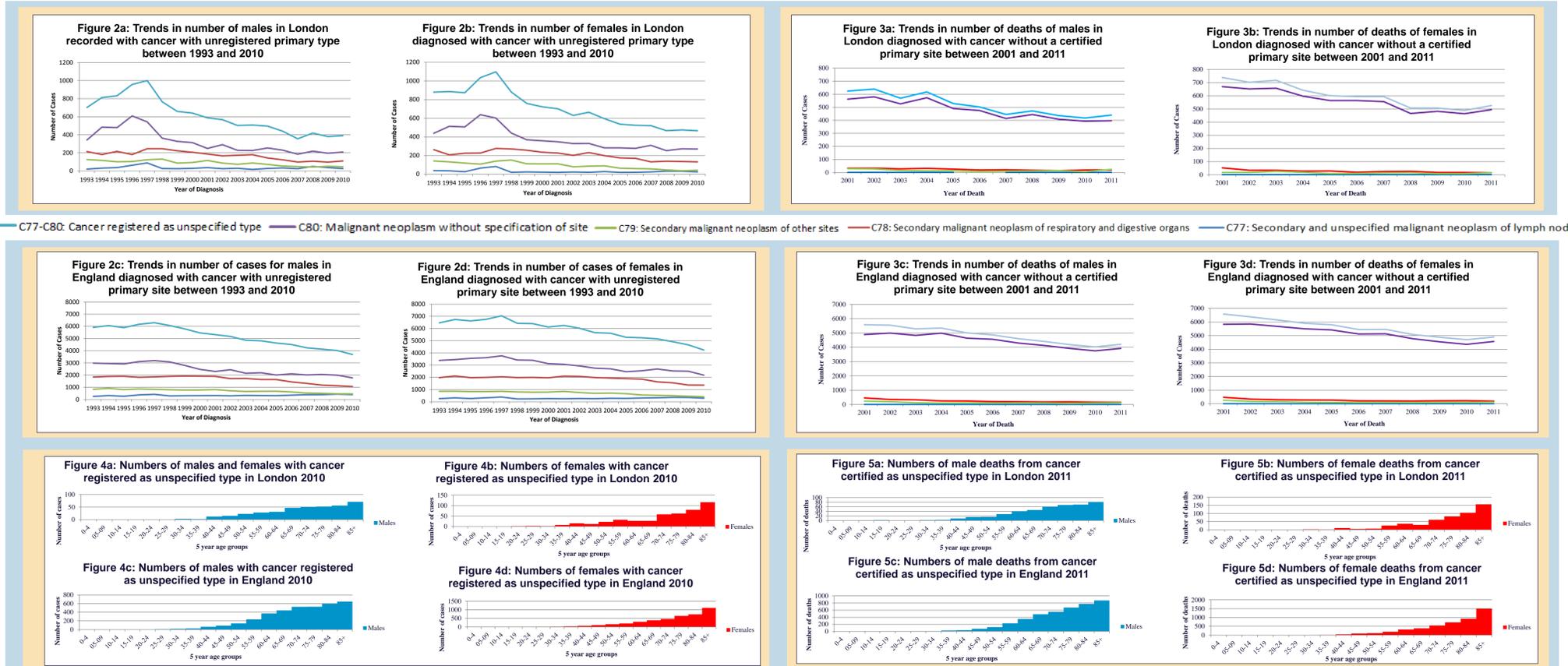


Table 1: Percentage of cancer cases registered without a primary type out of total cancer incidence in 2010

Age Group	London	England
0-74	2	2
over 75s	4	4
All	3	3

Table 2: Percentage of deaths from cancer registered without a primary type out of total cancer deaths in 2011

Age Group	London	England
0-74	6	6
over 75s	8	8
All	7	7

RESULTS

- Numbers of cancer cases registered as unspecified type for males and females in London peaked in 1997(1001 and 1097 respectively), and have declined rapidly to over half in 2010 (390 and 465 respectively). These trends are similar for males and females in England, where incidence peaked in 1997(6,302 and 7,037 respectively), and have declined to nearly half in 2010 (3,694 and 4,231 respectively) (Figures 2a - 2d).
- Numbers of deaths from cancer cases certified as unspecified type for males and females in London have declined less sharply from 2001 to 2011, Males death counts peak at 634 in 2002 and are lowest in 2010 at 418, increasing slightly to 440 in 2011 (Figure 3a). Females death counts peak at 738 in 2001 and are lowest in 2008 at 506, increasing slightly to 525 in 2011 (Figure 3b). These trends are similar for males and females in England, where death counts peaked at 5579 for males and 6584 in 2001 and have declined to 4,211 for males and 4,898 for females in 2011, as shown in Figure 3c and Figure 3d.
- In 2010, males in London aged 75 or over accounted for 55% of total recorded incidence of cancer registered as unspecified type. Females in London aged 75 or over accounted for 59% of total cases (Figures 4a - 4b).
- In 2010, males in England aged 75 or over accounted for 46% of total recorded incidence of cancer registered as unspecified type. Females in England aged 75 or over accounted for 48% of total cases (Figures 4c - 4d).
- In 2011, males in London aged 75 or over accounted for 50% of total recorded deaths of cancer certified as unspecified type. Females in England aged 75 or over accounted for 65% of total deaths (Figures 5a - 5b).
- In 2011, males in England aged 75 or over accounted for 55% of total recorded deaths of cancer certified as unspecified type. Females in England aged 75 or over accounted for 64% of total deaths (Figures 5c - 5d).
- In both London and England 3% of all cancers recorded in 2010 were cancers registered without primary type, 2% recorded in those aged 0-74 and 4% in those aged 75 or over (Table 1).
- In both London and England 7% of all cancer deaths recorded in 2011 were cancers certified without primary type, 6% recorded in those aged 0-74 and 8% in those aged 75 or over (Table 2).

CONCLUSIONS

- There are similar proportions of unspecified incidence cancer and deaths when comparing London to the rest of England.
- There are more cases of cancers registered as unspecified type in those aged 75 and over than in those aged 0-74.
- There are more females than males recorded with cancer registered as unspecified type in 2010, and there are overall more male than female cancer deaths registered as unspecified type.
- Between 1993 and 2010 there has been a decreasing trend in the incidence of recorded cancer registrations with unspecified type, in both males and females living in London and England.
- Between 2001 and 2011 there has been a slight decrease in deaths from cancers registered as unspecified type.