



## Be Clear on Cancer: Third national breast cancer in women over 70 awareness campaign, 2018

**Caveats:** This summary presents the results of the metric on diagnostics in secondary care. 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 of the campaign incorporating a full evaluation of all the metrics is published separately. These metrics should not be considered in isolation.

### Diagnostics in secondary care

#### The campaign

The third national breast cancer in women over 70 awareness campaign ran from 22 February 2018 to 31 March 2018 in England.

Two core campaign messages were promoted:

- ‘One in three women who get breast cancer are over 70, so don’t assume you’re past it.’
- ‘A lump isn’t the only sign of breast cancer. If you’re worried about any changes to your breasts, tell your doctor straight away.’

#### Key messages

The third national breast cancer in women over 70 campaign may have had some impact on the number of breast ultrasounds and mammograms.

#### Metric: Diagnostics in secondary care

This metric considers whether the third national breast cancer campaign had an impact on the number of imaging tests conducted by the NHS. These include ultrasound of the breast and mammograms.

The data on the total number of breast ultrasounds and mammograms (hereafter referred to as ultrasounds and mammograms) were obtained from the Diagnostic Imaging Dataset (DID) held on NHS Digital’s iView system (<https://iview.hscic.gov.uk/Home/About>). The data contains details of referrals by GPs, consultants and other healthcare professionals.

This metric compares the difference in the monthly number of ultrasounds and mammograms between the analysis period of March to May 2018 and the comparison period of March to May 2017.

#### Results

Comparing the months March to May 2018 with March to May 2017, there was a 14.5% increase in the number of ultrasounds and mammograms for women over 70 and a 4.3%

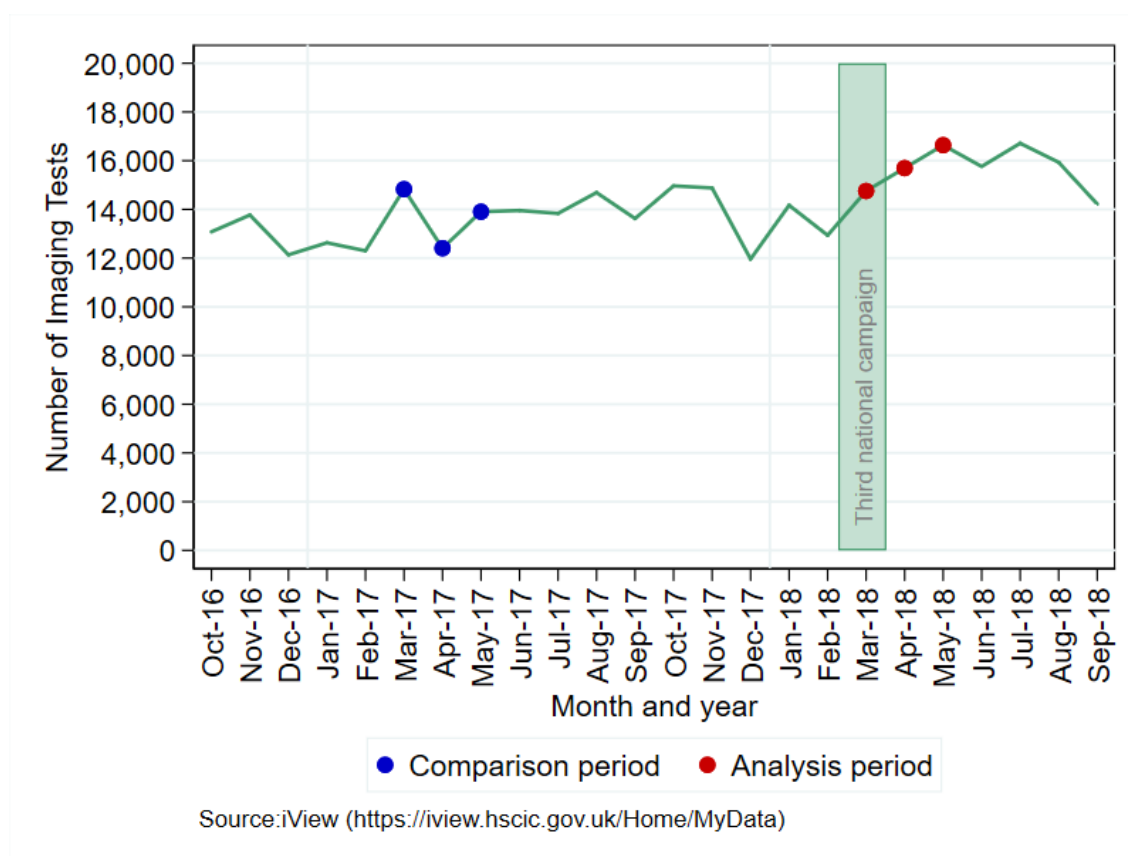
increase for women of all ages (Table 1). However, these changes were not statistically significant. Figure 1 shows the trend in the number of ultrasounds and mammograms from October 2016 to September 2018.

**Table 1: Number of ultrasounds and mammograms in March 2017 to May 2017 and March 2018 to May 2018, England**

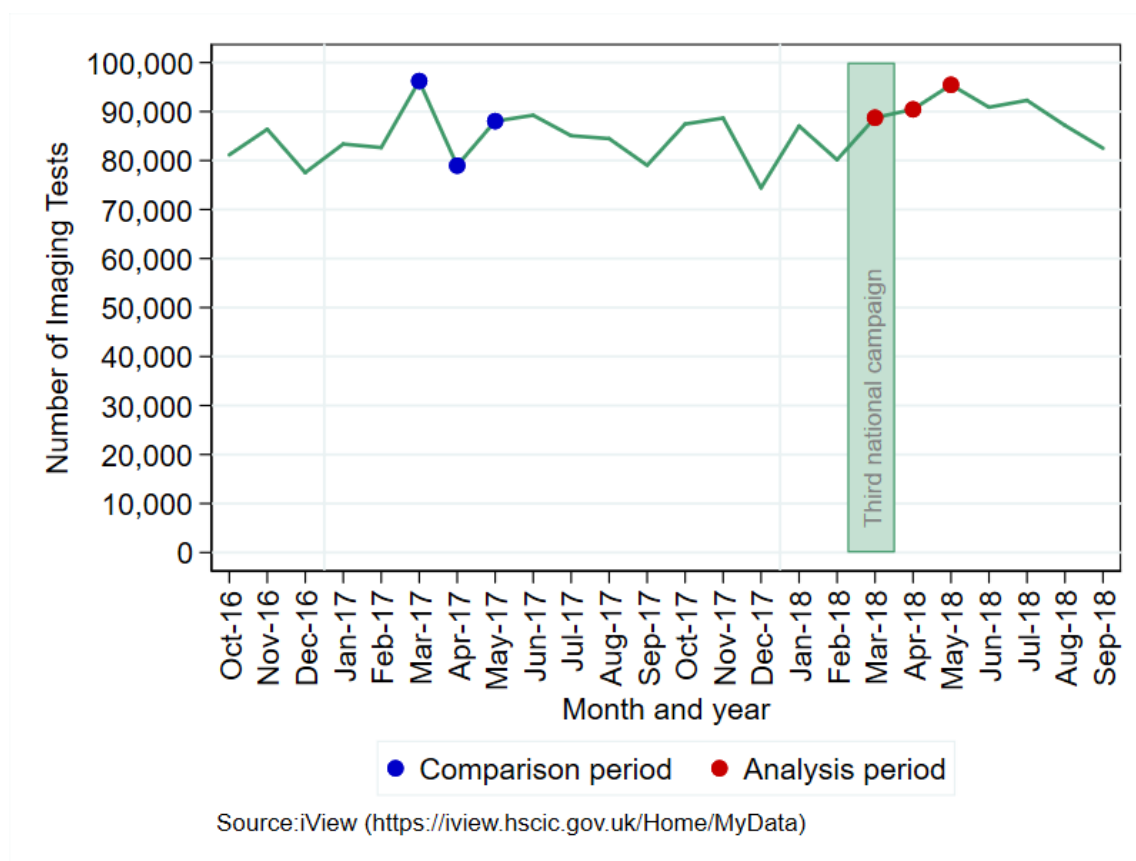
Tests	Age group	March 2017 to May 2017	March 2018 to May 2018	Percentage change
Number of imaging tests	Women Over 70	41,140	47,090	14.5
	Women of all ages	263,235	274,650	4.3

**Figure 1: Monthly number of ultrasounds and mammograms, October 2016 to September 2018, England a) Women over 70 b) Women of all ages**

**a) Women over 70**



## b) Women of all ages



## Conclusions

There was an increase in the number of breast ultrasounds and mammograms, which appears to be above the long-term trend. However, this increase was not statistically significant.

The third national breast cancer in women over 70 campaign may have had some impact on the number of breast ultrasounds and mammograms.

Other metrics being evaluated include Cancer Waiting Times referrals, conversion and detection rate, numbers of cancers diagnosed, stage at diagnosis 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, and 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 and stage at diagnosis).

Find out more about Be Clear on Cancer at:

[www.ncin.org.uk/be\\_clear\\_on\\_cancer](http://www.ncin.org.uk/be_clear_on_cancer)  
[www.nhs.uk/be-clear-on-cancer](http://www.nhs.uk/be-clear-on-cancer)