



Be Clear on Cancer: Third national lung cancer campaign, 2014

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 lung cancer campaign ran from 10 March 2014 to 30 April 2014 in England.

The campaign's key message was:

- 'Been coughing for three weeks? Tell your doctor.'

Metric: Diagnostics in secondary care

This metric considers whether the third national lung cancer campaign had an impact on the number of imaging tests conducted by the NHS. These comprise chest x-rays and chest and abdominal CT scan tests conducted for suspected lung cancer – hereafter referred to as x-rays and CT scans.

The data on the total number of x-rays and CT scans were obtained from the Diagnostic Imaging Dataset (DID) held on NHS Digital's iView system (<https://iview.hscic.gov.uk/DomainInfo/DiagnosticImaging>). Data were restricted to x-rays and CT scans referred via GP surgeries.

This metric compares the difference in the monthly number of x-rays and CT scans between the analysis period of March 2014 to June 2014 and the comparison period of March 2013 to June 2013.

Key messages

The campaign may have had some impact on the number of x-rays and CT scans carried out for suspected lung cancer.

Results

Comparing the months March 2013 to June 2013 with March 2014 to June 2014, there was a 16.8% statistically significant increase in the number of x-rays and CT scans for people's age 50 years and over, and a statistically significant 17.6% increase for peoples of all ages (Table 1). However, these increases may have started prior to the campaign (Figure 1)

Table 1: Number of x-rays and CT scans in March 2013 to June 2013 and March 2014 to June 2014, England

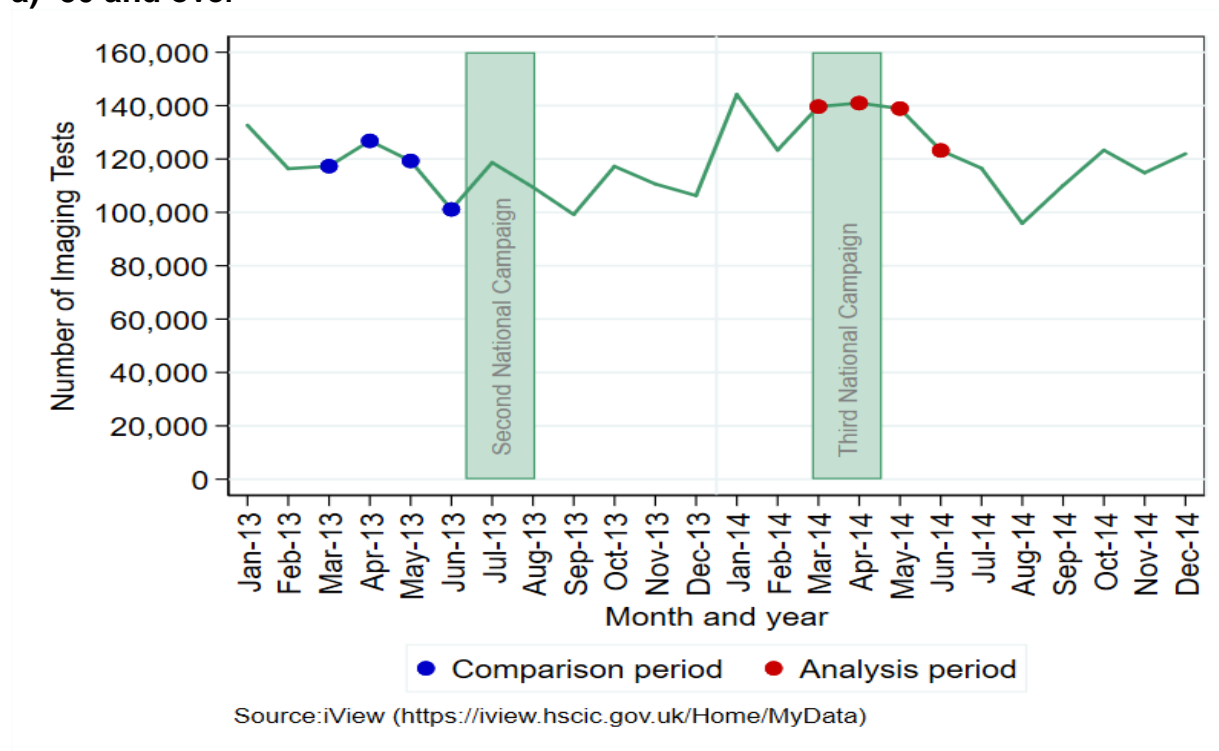
Tests	Age group	March 2013 to June 2013	March 2014 to June 2014	Percentage change	p-value
x-rays and CT scans	50 and over	464,475	542,705	16.8	0.029
	All ages	643,845	757,045	17.6	0.029
x-rays	50 and over	454,415	529,540	16.5	0.034
	All ages	631,840	741,565	17.4	0.033
CT scans	50 and over	10,060	13,165	30.9	<0.001
	All ages	12,005	15,480	28.9	<0.001

There was a statistically significant 16.5% and 17.4% increase in the number of x-rays comparing the analysis and comparison periods, for persons aged 50 years and over and all ages, respectively (Table 1). However, these increases may have started prior to the campaign.

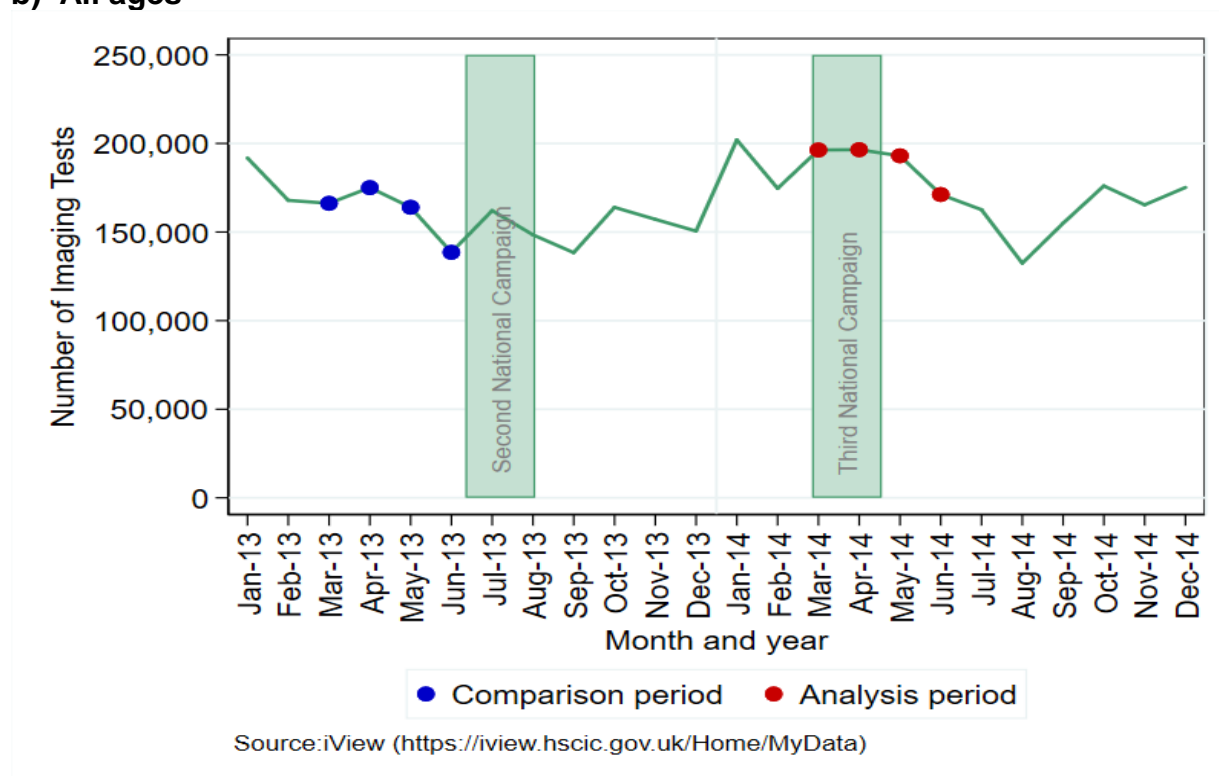
There was a statistically significant 30.9% and 28.9% increase in the number of CT scans comparing the analysis and comparison periods, for persons aged 50 years and over and all ages, respectively (Table 1). However, this was in line with the long-term trend (data not shown).

Figure 1: Monthly number of X-rays and CT scans in January 2013 to December 2014, England a) 50 and over b) All ages

a) 50 and over



b) All ages



Conclusion

There was a statistically significant increase in the number of x-rays and CT scans, however these increases may have started prior to the campaign.

The campaign may have had some impact on the number of x-rays and CT scans carried out for suspected lung cancer.

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
www.nhs.uk/be-clear-on-cancer/