



Be Clear on Cancer: Second national respiratory symptoms campaign, 2017

Caveats: This summary presents the results of the metric on echocardiograms. This is one of a series of 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.

Echocardiograms

The campaign

The second national respiratory symptoms campaign ran from 18 May to 31 August 2017 in England.

The core campaign messages were:

- 'If you've had a cough for three weeks or more, it could be a sign of lung disease, including cancer. Finding it early makes it more treatable. So don't ignore it, tell your doctor.'
- 'If you get out of breath doing things you used to be able to do, it could be a sign of lung or heart disease, or even cancer. Finding it early makes it more treatable. So don't ignore it, tell your doctor.'

Key message

The second national respiratory symptoms campaign may have had some impact on the number of echocardiograms conducted.

Metric: Number of echocardiograms

This metric considers whether the second respiratory campaign had an impact on the number of echocardiograms performed by the NHS.

The number of echocardiograms conducted per month between January 2015 and November 2017 was sourced from the [NHS Monthly Diagnostic Waiting Times and Activity](#) dataset as published on the 11 January 2018. The total number of echocardiograms in the analysis period was compared to the same period in 2015¹. The analysis period was defined as May to September 2017.

Results

Comparing the months May to September 2017 with May to September 2015, there was a statistically significant difference in the average number of echocardiograms per month ($p < 0.001$). Comparing these two periods, the average number of echocardiograms per month

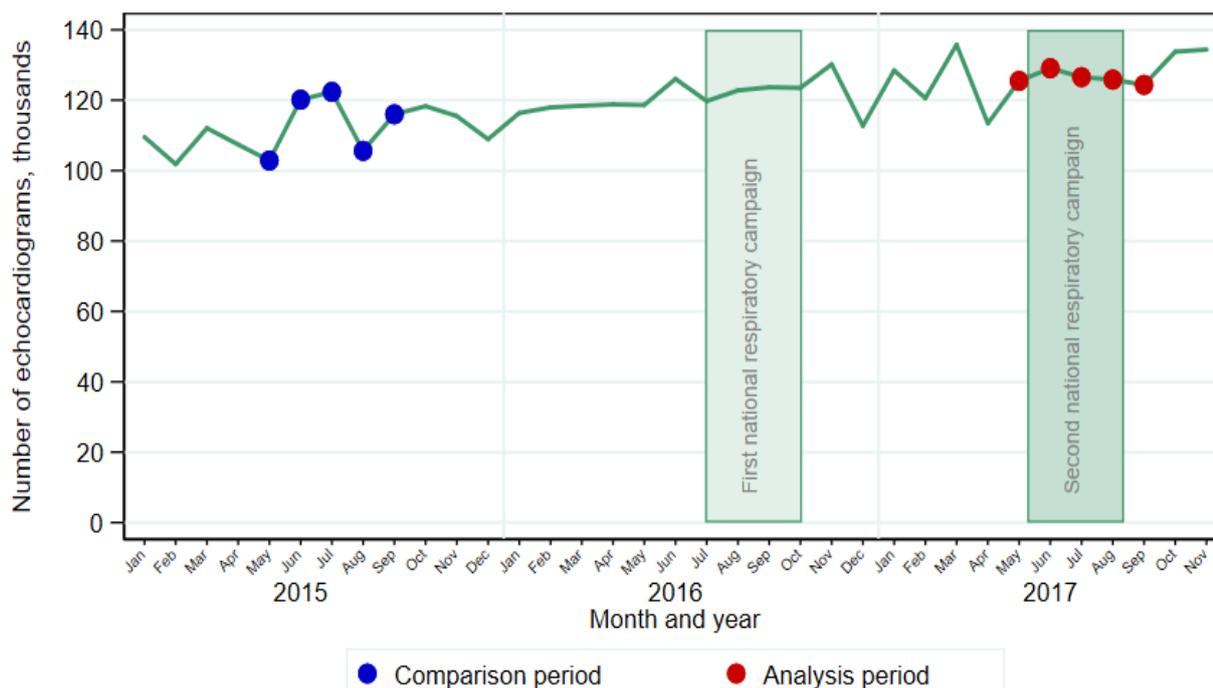
¹ Data was not compared to the same period in the previous year (2016) as data for this period may be affected by the first national respiratory symptoms campaign which ran from 14 July 2016 to 16 October 2016.

increased by 11.3% from 113,387 in 2015 to 126,257 in 2017 (Table 1). However, as Figure 1 illustrates, this result appears to be in line with long term trends.

Table 1: Average number of echocardiograms, campaign period and comparison period, all ages, England

Test	May - September 2015	May - September 2017	Percentage change
Echocardiogram	113,387	126,257	11.3%

Figure 1: Monthly number of echocardiograms, January 2015 to November 2017, all ages, England



Source: NHS Monthly Diagnostic Waiting times and Activity published 11 January 2018

Conclusions

There was a statistically significant increase in the number of echocardiograms conducted, though this appears to be in line with the long-term trend.

The second national respiratory symptoms campaign may have had some impact on the number of echocardiograms conducted.

Other metrics being evaluated include emergency presentations, urgent GP referrals for suspected cancer, conversation rates, 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/