Afternoon session 1: Cancer and primary care

14:45 - APPROXIMATELY A QUARTER OF PERSONS WITH CANCER DON'T HAVE A CANCER WAITING TIMES RECORD – WHO ARE THEY?

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Objectives
To characterise the population who have tumours present in the cancer registries but do not have a 31-day Cancer Waiting Times record.

Methods
Patient level Cancer Waiting Times data (including patient identifiers) were downloaded from the DH Cancer Waiting Times Database for 2006-2008. These were linked to patient level data in the NCIN National Cancer Data Repository. The demographics of the patient cohort not present in the 31-day Cancer Waiting Times database were compared to that present in both.

Results
Prior to 2009 31-day Cancer Waiting Times data were recorded for patients with any invasive cancer except basal cell carcinoma of the skin, and also recorded for in-situ breast cancers. All patients diagnosed with these cancers should be recorded, even if all treatment was declined. Numbers of 31-day Cancer Waiting Time patients increased from 203,000 to 213,000 for years between 2006 and 2008. Over the same period, and with the same range of cancers, cancer registries recorded between 273,000 and 300,000 cases. Over these three years only 74% of cases registered have a 31-day Cancer Waiting Times record. Analysis of the demographics of the cases in the NCDR without a corresponding 31-day Cancer Waiting Times record is underway. Their nature will be characterised by age, sex, cancer type, geography, deprivation quintile, ethnicity, and co-morbidity.

Conclusions
Numbers of 31-day patients are routinely used by frontline services to assess and plan capacity needs. Rates and ratios derived from Cancer Waiting Times data are used to benchmark services and performance. An accurate understanding of the completeness and character of the 31-day patient cohort is necessary to correctly interpret and use these figures.