Evaluation of five England-wide Be Clear on Cancer Campaigns

Gurnam Johal, Katie Haddock, Vivian Mak, Shona Lucitt, Lucy-Elliss Brookes, Mick Peake

Introduction

Be Clear on Cancer campaigns have been running in England since 2011. The campaigns aim to improve early diagnosis of cancer by raising public awareness of the signs and symptoms of cancer and by encouraging people to see their GP without delay.

Public Health England is responsible for the evaluation of all campaigns implemented from April 2013 onwards: currently 14 campaigns. Cancer Research UK evaluated campaigns prior to this. Each campaign is tested locally and regionally and then rolled out nationally if proven to be effective. Evaluation results are presented for five England-wide campaigns: Urological, Bowel, Breast, Lung, and Oesophago-gastric cancers.

Figure 1: Some campaign posters for Be Clear on Cancer.

Methods

Evaluation measures were agreed before each campaign. Key metrics included: public awareness of key campaign messages, GP attendances, GP referrals, diagnostic tests and cancer diagnoses. Each campaign ran over a set time period of 6-12 weeks between 2012 and 2015.

Results

The results vary from campaign to campaign and are summarised in these infographics.

We can see that the campaigns appear to have had an impact on people’s awareness of signs and symptoms and subsequent actions – with referrals and diagnoses often increasing significantly during and after the campaign period.

Cancer incidence is generally increasing and the results must be considered with this underlying trend in mind.

Campaigns are more likely to have a greater impact on metrics relating to patient behaviour (e.g. symptom awareness and GP attendance with relevant symptoms) and use of the healthcare system (e.g. urgent GP referrals for suspected cancer), compared to disease metrics (e.g. incidence, stage at diagnosis, and survival).

Individual metric results are being compiled to produce a full evaluation of the campaigns, including examination of the impact by age, sex and socio-economic status.

The results are used to inform decision making and planning for subsequent Be Clear on Cancer campaigns.

Figure 2: Infographic Summary of 5 national Be Clear on Cancer campaigns.

Conclusion

Robust evaluation of the Be Clear on Cancer campaigns has contributed to the evidence base for early diagnosis and the need to raise the awareness of symptoms. Analysis of the evaluation metrics by age, sex and socio-economic status allows us to better understand where the campaigns are having an impact and if they are reaching the target audience.

Acknowledgements

NHS England: Joanna Cottam, Sean Duffy
Department of Health: Jane Allberry, Lara Akpojiyovwi, Anna Garratt
Cancer Research UK: Amanda Boughey, Jodie Moffat, James O’Malley

References

1. http://www.ncin.org.uk/cancer_type_and_topic_specific_work/be_clear_on_cancer
2. For further information on campaign evaluation please contact NCRASenquiries@phe.gov.uk