Preliminary findings from qualitative interviews conducted as part of the LUCAS Study, a Health and Care Research Wales funded PhD studentship

Annie Hendry, Richard D Neal, Julia Hiscock

**Background and design**

Almost all cases of lung cancer are attributable to smoking. Previous research has shown smokers are more likely to delay help seeking. This study used qualitative interviews to explore reasons for delayed presentation in lung cancer patients.

**Symptom recognition**

Participants did not recognise that they were experiencing potential cancer symptoms. This was often due to either mistaking the symptoms for ongoing comorbidities, such as asthma and COPD, or to minor conditions such as a cold or chest infection.

> ‘That was like flu symptoms. Cold symptoms. It wasn’t anything sinister’

Denise, 52 yrs

**Decreased risk perception**

Despite having a history of smoking, participants reported that they did not think that they would be at risk of lung cancer. This was explained through the belief that the negative effects of smoking were ‘balanced out’ by otherwise healthy behaviours.

> ‘I know I’ve been fit. And healthy. Despite my smoking!’

Ivor, 75 yrs

**Downplaying symptoms**

Participants reported that they went to the doctor ‘if they needed to’ but also that they did not do so unnecessarily. Participants worried about ‘wasting doctor’s time’ and felt that some people were guilty of over using primary care.

> ‘I don’t like wasting people’s time, you know. ‘Cause there are enough – you get the impression from speaking to certain people they’re there every ten minutes’

Mark, 63 yrs