DIAGNOSIS OF CANCER THROUGH AN EMERGENCY PRESENTATION*

THEMATIC MAP OF CAUSAL MECHANISMS

**PERSON**
- Person's poor awareness of symptoms
  - No symptoms before EP
  - Vague, atypical, non-red flag symptoms
  - Very quick deterioration
  - Symptoms suggesting alternative diagnosis
  - Symptoms prompting referral to wrong specialty

**TUMOUR**
- Symptoms don't always meet 2WW criteria
- Varying levels of GP awareness of criteria
- Some cancers not represented in the guidelines
- Clarity lacking around criteria interpretation

**DIAGNOSTIC TESTS**
- Test not available
- Test inappropriate / inadequate to diagnose cancer
- Delays in test being performed
- Inappropriate person receiving results
- Poorly interpreted results
  - False reassurance of normal test result
  - Abnormal results inappropriately acted upon

**SYSTEM & HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS**
- Symptom experienced for a long time
- Symptoms concealed / denied
- Difficulty giving a good medical history
- Declining medical advice / reluctance to be tested
- Reluctance to come to GP surgery
- Failing to attend appointments
- Slow to re-present or go for investigations

**Primary care**
- Processes in the practice
  - Lack of responsibility for the patient
  - Lack of vigilance for vulnerable people
  - Continuity of care
  - Poor communication within the practice

**Secondary care**
- Poor communication between primary and secondary care
- Unclear responsibility as patient moves between primary and secondary care

**Wider cancer community**
- Lack of responsibility for the patient
- Poor communication within secondary care
- Holistic approach lacking
- Inadequate referrals / pathways in secondary care

**During the consultation**
- Poor communication with the patient
- Inadequate medical histories taken
- Appropriate examinations not performed
- Referring too late / to wrong specialty
- Poor safety-netting and documenting
- Working diagnosis not re-assessed

**Role of guidelines**
- Symptoms don't always meet 2WW criteria
- Varying levels of GP awareness of criteria
- Some cancers not represented in the guidelines
- Clarity lacking around criteria interpretation

*Emergency presentation includes presentation via Emergency department / A&E, emergency GP referral, transfer, admission or attendance.

Based on: The Thames Valley audit of people diagnosed with cancer through an emergency route.