



NATIONAL LUNG CANCER AUDIT 2009: HALF OF PATIENTS DO NOT SEE A LUNG CANCER NURSE

The National Lung Cancer Audit published by the NHS Information Centre on 2nd December 2009 shows that:

- Only half (51%) of lung cancer patients are currently seen by a lung cancer specialist nurse and only one in four have a nurse specialist present at the time of the diagnosis.
- Where patients are seen by a lung cancer nurse, six out of ten (59.4%) receive active treatment / treatment to halt the spread of their disease*
- Conversely, where lung cancer patients do not have access to a lung cancer specialist nurse, only three in ten (30.9%) receive any form of active treatment*

*This relationship has not been measured previously and further work will be required to define its precise significance, but it does suggest, at the very least, a strong association between good specialist nursing and other aspects of high quality care.

Other highlights from the report:

- 94 percent of all lung cancer cases are now recorded in the National Lung Cancer Audit (over double the number first recorded in 2005)

However, despite nearly all hospital trusts in England, Scotland and Wales now participating in the Audit:

- Only around one in ten patients receive surgery (11%) – still the best chance of a cure
- Only about half (54%) of patients receive any form of treatment to halt the spread of their disease
- There remains wide variation in standards across the country

Official Comment from UK Lung Cancer Coalition:

"The National Lung Cancer Audit appears to show that, where specialist nurses are at the heart of the multidisciplinary lung cancer teams, patients are more likely to receive active treatment and this could have a big impact on survival. The UK Lung Cancer Coalition believes that every lung cancer patient should have access to a lung cancer nurse from the moment they are diagnosed." Dame Gill Oliver, Chair, UK Lung Cancer Coalition.

NB Active treatment – treatment to halt spread of disease i.e. chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery

Official Comment from National Lung Cancer Forum for Nurses:

"The National Lung Cancer Audit highlights the pivotal role of lung cancer nurse specialists and yet lung cancer continues to be the poor relation. On average, there is one lung cancer nurse in England for every 132 people diagnosed with lung cancer, compared to 82 people per every breast cancer nurse. Without access to lung cancer nurses, patients will suffer as they will not have access to the in-depth nursing knowledge, care and support that lung cancer specialist nurses can provide." Liz Darlison, Chair, National Lung Cancer Forum for Nurses.