



UNITED KINGDOM
LUNG CANCER COALITION

UKLCC – Are we emerging from the shadow of lung cancer?

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Lung cancer treatment in UK is 'woefully inadequate'

By Matt Dickinson

KEY AREAS of lung-cancer treatment are still "woefully inadequate" and could be costing up to 3,000 lives a year, leading researchers said today.

A third of patients still do not receive a biopsy to diagnose their condition and thousands are denied life-saving surgery because of a lack of experienced specialists, according to the United Kingdom Lung Cancer Coalition (UKLCC).

In some parts of the UK, fewer than 10 per cent of patients receive any form of treatment to halt the spread of their disease, the coalition added.

Dr Mick Peake, chairman of the UKLCC's clinical advisory group, said: "There are only 44 full-time equivalent

specialist thoracic surgeons spread thinly over 240 multidisciplinary cancer teams across the country, and many teams lack core members. Alarmingly, patients who are fit for surgery are being turned down."

Dr Peake said the coalition was calling for a 70 per cent active treatment rate across the board, which could, he added, save up to 3,000 lives each year. Lung cancer is the second most common cancer in the UK, with around 39,000 diagnoses and 34,500 deaths a year.

The UKLCC's recommendations follow a national review of lung cancer services. A Department of Health spokeswoman said: "We have seen significant improvements in cancer services over the past 10 years, and approximately £4.96bn was spent on cancer services in 2007-08."