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### Impact of referral source on patient attendance outcomes in patients with cancer presenting to Accident and Emergency Departments

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**Background & Aims:** Patients with cancer often experience complex pain and symptom control issues that can cause them to seek medical advice from a number of sources including Accident and Emergency departments (A&E), emergency services, their general practitioner (GP), and other medical and non-medical sources. We aim to examine the impact of referral source on clinical outcomes in patients with cancer who present to Accident & Emergency (A&E).

**Methods:** We identified 4,407 patients who had died from cancer between 2011 and 2014, and obtained routine clinical data from each A&E attendance in their last 12 months of life.

**Results:** 1,668 patients (38%) attended A&E. Patients either self-presented (19.7%), or via Emergency Services (62.7%), General Practitioner (4.7%), NHS-24 service (5.3%), other healthcare professionals (1.5%), or other non-healthcare professionals (6.1%).

Breakdown of severity of presentation by source was as follows: Emergency services: Resuscitation (R) 28.7%, Majors (Maj) 60.1%, Minors (Min) 11.1%; GP R(18.4%), Maj(53.5%), Min(28.1%); NHS24 R(18.9%), Maj(24.4%); self-presentation R(8.6%), Maj(33.5%), Min(57.7%); other medical: R(13.7%), Maj(35.3%), Min(51.0%); and other non-medical R(22.4%), Maj(49.2%), Min(27.9%).

Referral source compared to patient outcome demonstrated: patients admitted by emergency services were either admitted (76.1%), died (3.8%), transferred (2.6%), Discharged (17.1%). Patients admitted via GP were admitted (60.5%), died (2.6%), transferred (2.6%), or discharged (34.2%). Those admitted via NHS24 were admitted (74.0%), transferred (6.3%), or discharged (19.7%). Patients presenting via other medical routes were admitted (60.8%), transferred (9.8%), discharged (29.5%) and those presenting from non-medical sources were admitted (67.3%), died (3.4%), transferred (0.7%), discharged (27.4%). Where patients had self-presented they were admitted (36.5%), died (0.4%), transferred (9.9%), discharged (51.9%).

**Conclusions:** A significant number of patients with cancer attend A&E in their last year of life. The majority are admitted to hospital. Referral source is associated with severity of illness and likelihood admission.