

PS2.064

Determinants of general practitioner's cancer related gut feelings - a prospective cohort study

Gé Donker(1), E Wiersma(2), M Heins(1)

(1) NIVEL Primary Care Database, Sentinel Practices, Utrecht, The Netherlands.

(2) VU Medical Center, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Corresponding author: Dr Gé Donker, NIVEL Primary Care Database, Utrecht, The Netherlands. E-mail: g.donker@nivel.nl

Background: General practitioners (GPs) use gut feelings to diagnose cancer in an early stage, but little is known about its impact.

Aim: To explore triggers and GP's action based on gut feelings, determine the predictive value of gut feelings and how this is influenced by patient and GP characteristics.

Method: Prospective cohort study of patients in 44 general practices throughout the Netherlands, from January 2010 till December 2013. GPs completed a questionnaire regarding gut feelings, patient and GP characteristics, if they noticed a cancer-related gut feeling during patient consultation. Follow-up questionnaires were sent 3 months later requesting information about the patient's diagnosis. Chi-square, uni- and multivariate logistic regression and multilevel analyses were performed.

Results: A gut feeling (N=366) is most often triggered by weight loss (24%, N=85) and rare GP visits (22%, N=76), but only gut feelings triggered by a palpable tumour (14%, N=53) was predictive of cancer (48%). Most GPs (95%) acted immediately on the gut feeling, either referring to a specialist or by performing additional medical tests. The average positive predictive value of cancer related gut feeling was 35%. This increases with 2% for every year a patient becomes older, and with 3% for every year a GP becomes older.

Conclusion: GP's gut feeling for cancer proves to be a useful tool in diagnosing cancer and its relative high predicting value increases if the GP is older or more experienced and when the patient is older or has a palpable tumour.

