

S25

Timely diagnosis of symptomatic cancer in primary care; where do we stand and can we improve?

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Background & Aim: The annual number of patients newly diagnosed with cancer in Europe is rising. Consequently, cancer is now one the primary causes of death. Survival rates in countries with a GP centered gatekeeping healthcare system are generally below average compared to other countries in Europe. Recently, it has been suggested that ‘delay’ in primary care is a substantial contributing factor to these unfavorable cancer outcomes, through suboptimal recognition of cancer patients and subsequent delayed referral. In several European studies the duration of the diagnostic process and predictors of delay in primary care have been studied. We aim to present data on the diagnostic process of cancer in primary care and subsequent routes of referral, compare timelines in different countries, and discuss the possibilities for preventing unnecessary delay in this process, thus improving cancer outcomes. **Method:** In this symposium, we will provide an overview of the diagnostic process of cancer in primary care for the five most prevalent cancer types (breast, colon, lung, and prostate cancer and melanoma) in Netherlands, UK and Denmark. We will address the duration of diagnosis, predictors of relatively long duration and discuss the possibilities for reducing time in the diagnostic process. Presentations are provided by international expert speakers;

- Dr. Henry Jensen (affiliation 2), Denmark
- Prof. Richard Neal, PhD, (affiliation 3) Wales.
- Dr. Charles Helsper, MD and Nicole van Erp, MD, (affiliation 1) The Netherlands
- Chair; Prof. Dr. Niek de Wit, (affiliation 1) The Netherlands

Results: After the symposium participants will have an overview of the diagnostic process in primary care in different countries, including an indication of duration and patients at risk of delay.

Conclusion: This symposium aims to provide an overview of the diagnostic process of cancer in- and from primary care and discuss the possibilities for preventing unnecessary delay, and improving outcomes.