

Nearly 10 per cent of bowel cancer patients die within a month of diagnosis

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(Medical Xpress) -- Almost 10 per cent of bowel cancer patients die within a month of being diagnosed according to new analysis by the National Cancer Intelligence Network (NCIN), published today.

And, of those dying within a month, over half (56 per cent) were over 80 years old and 60 per cent were diagnosed following an emergency admission to hospital.

Researchers from the University of Leeds and the Hull York Medical School collaborated with the Northern and Yorkshire Cancer Registry and Information Service (NYCRIS), and looked at the data of all [bowel cancer](#) patients diagnosed in England between 2006 and 2008.

During these three years, 91,980 people were diagnosed with bowel cancer and around 9,000 died within one month.

Eva Morris, a study author from the University of Leeds, said:
“Compared to elsewhere in Europe our survival rates are poor and, as this study shows, one of the key reasons is because a large number of patients present with rapidly fatal disease. And, crucially, the report highlights that these people tend to first be seen as an emergency patient in hospital and have advanced disease and can’t be offered treatment that could potentially cure them.

“But, there is a problem of older patients being more likely to die quickly after a bowel cancer diagnosis.”

Mick Peake, chief clinician at the National Cancer Intelligence Network (NCIN), said: “This new analysis shows just how important it is to spot the early signs of cancer. It suggests that the public, especially the elderly, may not be aware of the diseases’ warning signs or they don’t want to bother their doctor with possible symptoms and so are being diagnosed at a late stage in the course of their illness. Increasing awareness of the symptoms of the disease and diagnosing patients at an early stage is vital if we are to improve survival from the disease.”

Chris Carrigan, head of the NCIN, said: “We need to ensure that the public are aware of the early signs of bowel cancer like having blood in your poo or loose poo for more than three weeks. We must also try and break down any barriers preventing people going to their GP when they have these symptoms.

“And bowel screening is routinely offered to men and women aged 60-69 every two years and evidence is showing that it is very effective at diagnosing cancers at an early stage. That is why routine invitations are being extended to men and women aged up to 75. Those above the age limit can self refer every two years. ”

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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