

Personalised web advice for those who suspect lung cancer

November 9 2015, by Jamie Brown



University of Manchester researchers are trialling a new tool that is designed to get people who may have lung cancer to their doctor earlier.

Current web information generally provides a list of [symptoms](#) which patients look at and decide for themselves whether to visit their GP. However many patients put up with symptoms for months before reporting themselves for testing.

The new web tool, When2Go, aims to provide more personalised advice by asking questions about symptoms such as unintentional weight loss or persistent coughing.

As [people](#) are asked, and answer, more questions, the software builds up a more accurate picture that culminates in a recommendation of whether or not to visit a GP. It also generates a report which the user can take with them.

Julia Mueller is the researcher behind the study. She said: "People often talk about 'Dr Google', but web information, even from reputable sources such as the NHS is general in nature."

"By building up a more detailed picture of the people looking for help we hope to make the advice better. A system that stops people with symptoms putting off seeing their doctor could help to save their lives."

When2Go is currently in the trial stage so Julia and her colleagues are recruiting people to try out the software. They must be based in the UK, over 18 and have, or know some who has, any of these symp

- A cough (whether dry and tickly or productive with phlegm)
- A long-standing cough that changes or gets worse
- Feeling out of breath
- Discomfort in the chest, shoulder or back
- Coughing up phlegm with blood in it (even if just a few specks) or spitting blood
- Changes in the voice
- Unexplained weight loss or unexplained loss of appetite
- Swelling of face and neck
- Persistent or recurring chest infections
- Tiredness or lack of energy
- Any changes in the appearance of the fingers or fingernails (such as a softening of the nailbed, stronger than normal curving of the fingernails, or thickening of the fingertips).

Julia added: "The earlier a diagnosis of cancer takes place, the better the chances for the patient. This software isn't designed to alarm people, but instead, provide a better alternative to the general advice available online."

More information: To take part in the study, go to: www.when2go-study.co.uk/

Provided by University of Manchester

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