

# The key to good cancer care? Better admin

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One of the most important factors in people's overall experience of cancer care is good administration, according to results from a major new study funded by Macmillan Cancer Support and led by the University of Exeter Medical School in collaboration with University College London.

Analysis of more than 71,000 responses from the [2015 England Cancer Patient Experience Survey](#) shows people living with [cancer](#) who are not happy with the administration of their care are typically around twice as likely to be unsatisfied overall.

Examples of good administration range from patients receiving letters at the right time to doctors having access to their information.

Alongside good admin, NHS staff, such as GPs, hospital doctors and nurses, working well together was also one of the top two most important factors. Patients are twice as likely to say they are not satisfied with their overall care if their cancer team fail to communicate with each other effectively.

Involvement in decision making and the patient's relatives having the correct information needed to help care for them at home were also strongly associated with patient satisfaction.

The research findings are being presented at the PHE Cancer Services Data and Outcomes Conference in Manchester on 20th-21st June 2018.

Gary Abel, Senior Lecturer at the University of Exeter, said: "This research really reinforces the importance of asking patients about their experience of care using surveys such as the Cancer Patient Experience Survey. Working with these data sources can really help us to understand what matters most to patients.

"Furthermore, this work can help hospitals and other care providers understand where they can focus quality improvement efforts in order to have the biggest impact on patients' [experiences](#)."

Macmillan Cancer Support, which funded the research, is calling for good administration to be at the heart of cancer services – not merely an after-thought – to ensure patients have the right information and support to access their care.

Macmillan is also stressing the importance of access to multi-disciplinary, well-resourced cancer teams including doctors, nurses, health care professionals and a range of other supporting roles to ensure cancer patients experience the best level of care and an effective treatment process.

Jane Maher, Joint Chief Medical Officer at Macmillan Cancer Support, said: "Living with cancer is one of the most draining experiences someone can go through. Having to repeat information about our diagnosis and treatment, deal with health professionals who aren't up to date with your records, or receiving letters late simply adds to this already exhausting time.

"This research shows the huge impact good admin and communication within, and particularly, between different clinical teams can have on the experiences of cancer patients across England. Getting these things right plays a huge role in helping patients find their best way through cancer.

"It remains crucial that cancer services are well resourced with the right mix of doctors, nurses and support staff, supported by good admin and seamless communication, in order to deliver the best possible experience for all [patients](#)."

Emma Jessup, 30, from Sussex, said: "I was originally treated at one hospital, but after getting the all-clear I was referred to another, for scans and follow-up appointments.

"The team there don't know my history. Recently I was having a scan and a nurse flippantly said that I had a limp on my ovary and I started freaking out.

"It was obvious she hadn't read my history or didn't know it otherwise she wouldn't have said that. There was no communication between the hospitals."

Provided by University of Exeter

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