

Almost 2,000 lung cancer patients missing out on surgery every year

24 October 2014



'Cross Cancer Out' – will also focus on earlier diagnosis of all cancers.

Sara Hiom, director of early diagnosis at Cancer Research UK, said: "Access to curative treatments is vital if we aspire to having the world's best [survival rates](#). Cancer surgery can make all the difference, as recent increases in lung cancer operations have shown, and there has to be a very good reason not to offer patients a potentially life-saving operation.

Around 1,800 lung cancer patients may be missing out on life-saving surgery each year, according to the latest regional cancer statistics from Cancer Research UK.

New data on Cancer Research UK's '[Local Cancer Statistics](#)' website has revealed a worrying number of [lung cancer](#) patients in England [may not be having surgery](#) as part of their treatment. And around 1,000 of these patients are not having operations despite their disease being diagnosed at an early stage, when [surgery](#) is more likely to be successful.

Around 4,500 people with non small-cell lung [cancer](#) had major surgery last year**. Experts believe that surgery is responsible for around half of the cases where any cancer is cured. And although it is not always appropriate for every patient, it plays a significant role in improving lung cancer survival.

Cancer Research UK today launches a new campaign ahead of next year's general election, calling on all [political parties](#) to make access to treatment a key priority. The campaign – called

"Surgery may not always be an option if the disease has spread, the patient decides they don't want to undergo surgery or if they aren't well enough for the operation. But previous research has suggested that some older patients who are eligible for surgery are being overlooked because of their age. It's vital we remove any barriers so that patients who might benefit from surgery are given that option.

"These figures also highlight the urgent need to diagnose more lung cancers earlier. When the disease is diagnosed in the earliest stages, you have more options – such as surgery – and treatment is more likely to lead to a long-term cure. Early diagnosis and access to treatment must be key priorities for the Government if it's serious about improving the UK's cancer survival rates."

The 'Cross Cancer Out' campaign will focus on a number of key commitments aimed at improving cancer survival in the UK:

- Equal access to innovative radiotherapy, surgery and effective cancer drugs, including drugs targeted to patients' tumours;
- Continued support for campaigns to raise public awareness of the signs and symptoms of cancer;
- A commitment to increase participation in the national bowel cancer screening

programme.

Sarah Woolnough, Cancer Research UK's executive director of policy, said: "Lung cancer is one of the hardest cancers to treat, so it's unacceptable that so many [lung cancer patients](#) are missing out on vital surgery. We know from hard-working NHS staff that already the service is at a 'tipping point' and overstretched. There needs to be vital support and increased investment for [cancer patients](#) now and in the future.

"Cancer Research UK has been at the heart of the progress that has already seen survival rates in the UK double in the last 40 years. In order to accelerate progress and see more people beating the disease, all political parties must commit to making our NHS cancer services the best in the world."

Provided by Cancer Research UK

APA citation: Almost 2,000 lung cancer patients missing out on surgery every year (2014, October 24) retrieved 6 September 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-10-lung-cancer-patients-surgery-year.html>

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