



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Saturday 1 November 2014**

### **ETHNIC MINORITIES LESS AWARE OF CANCER SYMPTOMS AND MORE LIKELY TO IDENTIFY BARRIERS TO SEEKING MEDICAL HELP**

ETHNIC minorities in England are less aware of cancer symptoms and more likely to say they wouldn't see the doctor, even when they have a symptom that they think might be serious, according to research being presented at the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference in Liverpool next week.

Researchers looked at nearly 50,000 responses to the Cancer Research UK Cancer Awareness Measure\* from people across England. They found that ethnic minority groups were consistently less aware of cancer symptoms.

People with a black ethnic background were half as likely as white people to recognise that unexplained bleeding could be a symptom of cancer; while South Asians were a quarter as likely as white people to recognise that an unexplained lump or swelling could be a cancer symptom.

Most ethnic minority groups also tended to describe more barriers putting them off going to the doctor to discuss an unexplained symptom. South Asians were most likely to report embarrassment and a lack of confidence to talk about their symptoms. But white people were most likely to report that worrying about wasting the doctor's time would put them off going to their GP.

Maja Niksic, study author at King's College London, said: "This study highlights the need to develop more targeted health messages in order to encourage people with symptoms to visit their GPs sooner. It's essential that we tailor these messages to address the different needs and gaps in cancer awareness that exist between different ethnic groups.

"Early diagnosis is a vital part of improving survival from cancer, which is why it's essential to increase public awareness of the signs and symptoms of cancer - and encourage people to seek medical help if they notice any unexplained changes in their body."

Sara Hiom, director of early diagnosis at Cancer Research UK, said: "This type of research helps us to adapt our information and find better ways to encourage people to get their symptoms checked out quickly.

"Thousands of people beat cancer every year and treatment is more likely to be successful when cancer is diagnosed in the earliest stages. Getting to know your body and what's normal for you will help you spot something unusual or persistent, which you should mention to your doctor as soon as possible."

Professor Matthew Seymour, NCRI's Clinical Research Director, said: "This research highlights the importance of tailoring public health messages to different groups so that everyone has a better chance of beating cancer, regardless of their ethnic background.

"Being aware of common cancer symptoms, as well as being confident in seeking advice from the GP, gives people the best chance of getting diagnosed in the earliest stages, when treatment is more likely to be effective."

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**ENDS**

**For media enquiries please contact Greg Jones on 020 3469 8300  
or, out-of-hours, the duty press officer on 07050 264 059.**

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**Notes to editors**

Read the full abstract - <http://conference.ncri.org.uk/abstracts/2014/abstracts/B085.html>

\*The Cancer Awareness Measure (CAM) - an early output from the National Awareness and Early Diagnosis Initiative (NAEDI) was developed by Cancer Research UK, University College London, Kings College London and Oxford University in 2007-8. The CAM is the first validated tool to assess awareness of cancer including questions about signs and symptoms, risk factors, cancer screening programmes, barriers to seeing the doctor, anticipated time to seek help and awareness of common cancers. The CAM can benchmark public awareness at a national, regional and local level, make international comparisons and track awareness over time. It identifies gaps in knowledge, of particular symptoms, risk factors, or among specific population groups, helping to inform the development of more targeted interventions. It is also used to evaluate the impact of awareness-raising initiatives, such as the Department of Health's Be Clear on Cancer campaigns.

**About the NCRI**

- The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) is a UK-wide partnership between the government, charity and industry. It's role is to promote cooperation in cancer research.
- NCRI Partners are: the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI); Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Breast Cancer Campaign; Cancer Research UK; Children with Cancer UK; Department of Health; Economic and Social Research Council; Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research; Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research; Macmillan Cancer Support; Marie Curie Cancer Care; Medical Research Council; Northern Ireland Health and Social Care (Research & Development Office); Prostate Cancer UK; Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation; Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorates (Chief Scientist Office); Tenovus; Welsh Government (National Institute for Social Care and Health Research); Worldwide Cancer Research (formerly the Association for International Cancer Research); Wellcome Trust; and Yorkshire Cancer Research.
- For more information visit [www.ncri.org.uk](http://www.ncri.org.uk)

**About the NCRI Cancer Conference**

- The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference is the UK's major forum for showcasing the best British and international cancer research.
- The Conference offers unique opportunities for networking and sharing knowledge by bringing together world-leading experts from all cancer research disciplines.
- The tenth NCRI Cancer Conference is taking place from 2–5 November 2014 at the BT Convention Centre in Liverpool.
- For more information visit [conference.ncri.org.uk](http://conference.ncri.org.uk)