

Statistics Release



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

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AN ROINN
**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÄNNYSTRIE O
**Poustie, Resydënter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

24 June 2010

Northern Ireland Cancer Waiting Times – January, February and March 2010

This statistics release gives details of the waiting times for patients accessing cancer services at hospitals in Northern Ireland during the months of January, February and March 2010.

Data contained within this release reports on the performance of Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland, measured against the three Priorities for Action (PfA) targets for 2009/10, and relates to waiting times for cancer services in Northern Ireland during January, February and March 2010.

Waiting Times for a First Assessment with a Breast Cancer Specialist

Achievement of the 2009/10 PfA target relating to waiting times for a first assessment with a Breast Cancer Specialist requires that ‘from April 2009, all urgent breast cancer referrals should be seen within 14 days’.

Table 1 reports on the performance of all Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland towards the target for all urgent referrals for the months of January, February and March 2010.

Table 1: Reporting on the 14 day waiting time target from referral to a first assessment with a breast cancer specialist in Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland¹

January – March 2010

	No. of patients first seen by a breast cancer specialist during the month following all urgent referrals for suspected cancer								
	No. that waited 14 days or less			Total			Percentage (%)		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Jan	Feb	Mar	Jan	Feb	Mar
Belfast	220	232	277	220	232	277	100.0	100.0	100.0
Northern	85	85	105	85	85	105	100.0	100.0	100.0
Southern	117	142	178	117	142	178	100.0	100.0	100.0
South Eastern	90	114	135	90	114	135	100.0	100.0	100.0
Western	108	145	131	108	154	153	100.0	94.2	85.6
Northern Ireland	620	718	826	620	727	848	100.0	98.8	97.4

Source: Departmental Return SDR2

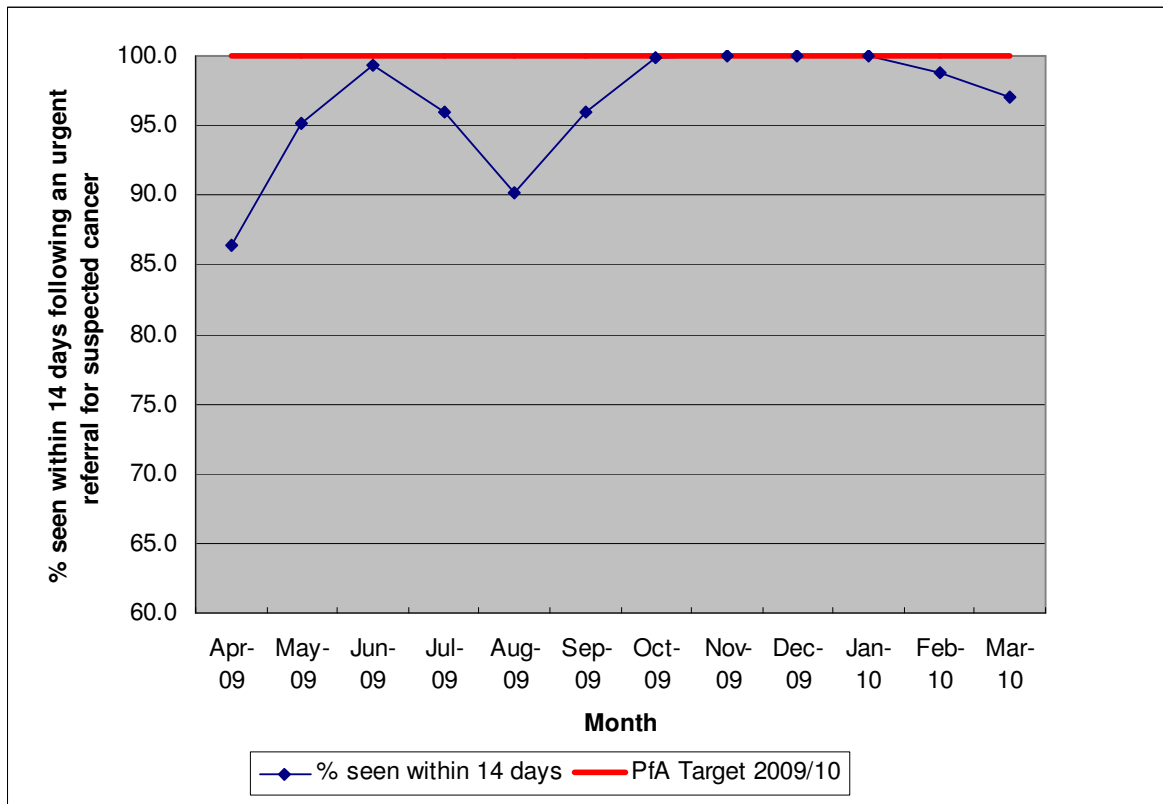
¹Refer to Technical Notes – points 1-4.

- All HSC Trusts met the target in January, February and March 2010, except for the Western HSC Trust who failed to see all patients within 14 days in both February and March 2010.
- During January 2010, all patients referred were seen within the 14 day maximum waiting time set in the 2009/10 PfA target.
- During the month of February, nine patients waited longer than 14 days for an appointment with a breast specialist, following an urgent referral for suspected breast cancer. These were all within the Western HSC Trust.
- During March 2010, 22 patients did not meet the 14 day waiting time target. All these were within the Western HSC Trust.

Trends

Reporting of the current 14 day breast cancer waiting time target began in April 2009. The percentage of patients seen within 14 days increased over the first three months to a position in June 2009 where 99.3% of patients were seen within the target. Performance against the target decreased over the next two months, falling to 90.2% of patients being seen within 14 days. The waiting time position then improved, with 100% of patients being seen by a breast specialist within 14 days in the months of October 2009 to January 2010. Performance against the target has declined since then. These trends are outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Percentage of patients seen by a breast specialist within 14 days of referral by a breast specialist following an urgent referral for suspected cancer – Monthly Trends April 2009 to March 2010



Source: Departmental Return SDR2

Waiting Times for Treatment

Achievement of the 2009/10 PfA target relating to waiting times for treatment following a decision to treat requires that ‘from April 2009, 98% of patients should commence treatment within 31 days of the decision to treat’.

Tables 2 and 3 report on the performance of Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland, and the reporting of waiting times by tumour site, respectively, towards this 31 day target for the months of January, February and March 2010.

Table 2: Reporting on the 31 day target from decision to treat to treatment for all cancers in Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland²

	January – March 2010								
	No. of patients first treated for Cancer								
	Treated within 31 days of a decision to treat being taken			Total			Percentage (%)		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Jan	Feb	Mar	Jan	Feb	Mar
Belfast	236	249	290	246	260	304	95.9	95.8	95.4
Northern	70	82	90	71	82	90	98.6	100.0	100.0
Southern	88	87	81	89	87	81	98.9	100.0	100.0
South Eastern	82	94	129	82	95	129	100.0	98.9	100.0
Western	73	86	87	73	86	87	100.0	100.0	100.0
Northern Ireland	549	598	677	561	610	691	97.9	98.0	98.0

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

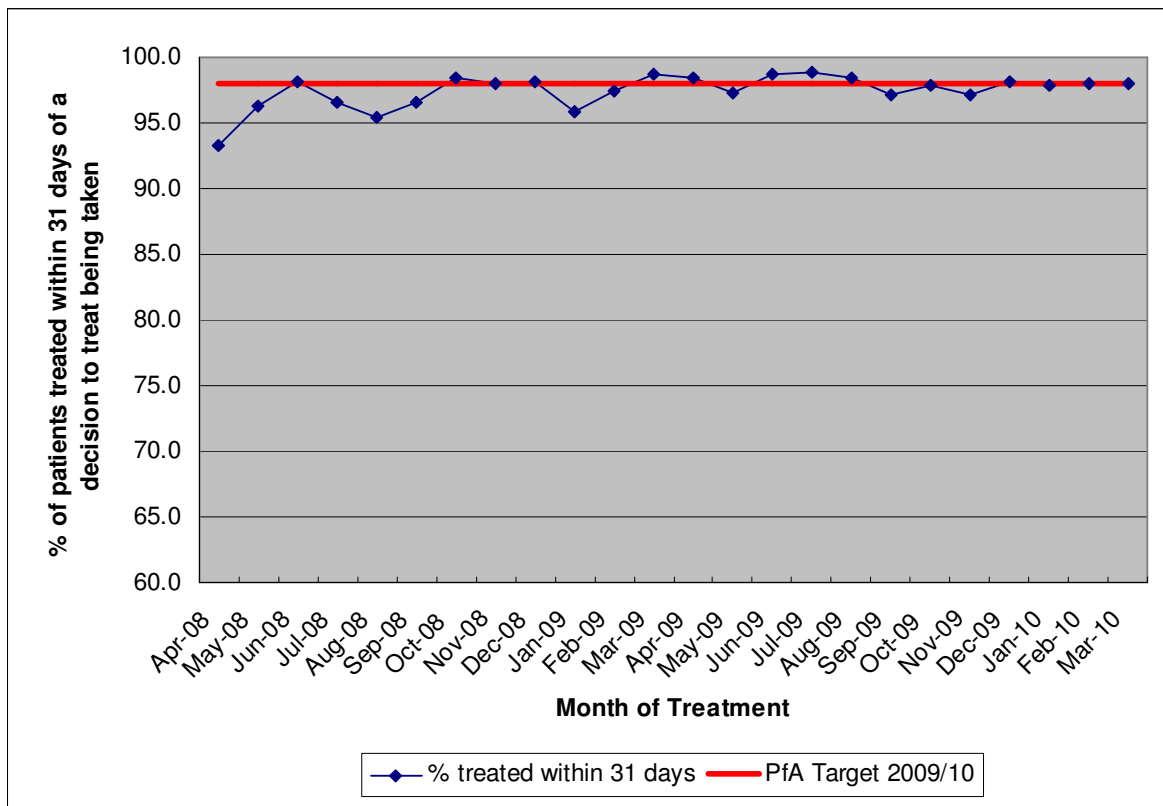
²Refer to Technical Notes – points 1, 5 & 6.

- The 2009/10 PfA target that 98% of patients should commence treatment within 31 days of the decision to treat was met for Northern Ireland as a whole in the months of February and March.
- All HSC Trusts met the target in the months of January, February and March 2010 except for Belfast HSC Trust which treated less than 98% of patients in each of the three months.
- During the month of January 2010, 561 patients commenced treatment for cancer following a decision to treat being taken, with 549 (97.9%) treated within 31 days. Of the 12 patients that exceeded the 31 day waiting time, 10 were in the Belfast HSC Trust, one was in the Northern HSC Trust, and one was in the Southern HSC Trust.
- In February 2010, 598 (98.0%) of the total 610 patients were treated within 31 days. Of the 12 patients that were not treated within 31 days, 11 were in the Belfast HSC Trust and one was in the South Eastern HSC Trust.
- In March 2010, 677 (98.0%) of the total 691 patients were treated within 31 days of a decision to treat being taken. Of the 14 patients that waited longer than 31 days for treatment, all were in the Belfast HSC Trust.

Trends

The reporting of the 31 day waiting time target began in April 2008. Between the months of April and June 2008 there was an upward trend in the percentage of patients treated within 31 days, to a position of 98.1% of patients being treated within 31 days of the decision to treat in June 2008. The percentage of patients treated within the waiting time target decreased over the next two months, with 95.5% of patients treated within 31 days in August 2008, the lowest percentage since April 2008. The waiting time position improved over the next four months, before dropping to 95.8% in January 2009. Since then, the trend has improved, and remained fairly constant reaching a peak in July 2009 with 98.9% of patients being treated within 31 days.

Figure 2: Percentage of patients treated within 31 days of a decision to treat being taken – Monthly Trends April 2008 to March 2010³



³Refer to Technical Notes – point 8.

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

Table 3: Reporting on the 31 day target from decision to treat to treatment by tumour site⁴

January – March 2010

Cancer Site	No. of patients first treated for Cancer								
	Treated within 31 days of a decision to treat being taken			Total			Percentage (%)		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Jan	Feb	Mar	Jan	Feb	Mar
Brain Central Tumour	8	10	14	8	10	14	100.0	100.0	100.0
Breast Cancer	80	103	120	80	103	120	100.0	100.0	100.0
Gynae Cancers	33	34	41	34	34	41	97.1	100.0	100.0
Haematological Cancers	46	38	37	46	38	37	100.0	100.0	100.0
Head/Neck Cancer	26	28	25	26	28	25	100.0	100.0	100.0
Lower Gastrointestinal Cancer	78	86	106	82	86	106	95.1	100.0	100.0
Lung Cancer	59	59	75	62	60	76	95.2	98.3	98.7
Sarcomas	1	5	2	1	5	2	100.0	100.0	100.0
Skin Cancers	71	90	85	71	90	85	100.0	100.0	100.0
Upper Gastrointestinal Cancer	44	35	40	44	38	41	100.0	92.1	97.6
Urological Cancer	96	104	122	100	112	134	96.0	92.9	91.0
Other	7	6	10	7	6	10	100.0	100.0	100.0
Northern Ireland	549	598	677	561	610	691	97.9	98.0	98.0

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

⁴Refer to Technical Notes – points 1, 5-7 & 14.

- During January 2010, 12 patients waited longer than 31 days for treatment from decision to treat being taken. Of these, four were diagnosed with urological cancer, four with lower gastrointestinal cancer, three with lung cancer, and one with gynaecological cancer.
- In February 2010, 12 of the total 610 patients were not treated within 31 days. Eight were given a diagnosis of urological cancer, three with upper gastrointestinal cancer, and one with lung cancer.
- In March 2010, 12 of the 14 patients waiting longer than 31 days had urological cancer, with an additional one person with upper gastrointestinal cancer, and one with lung cancer.

Waiting Times for Treatment following an Urgent GP referral for Suspect Cancer

Achievement of the 2009/10 Priorities for Action Target relating to waiting times for treatment following an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer requires that 'from April 2009, 95% of patients urgently referred with a suspected cancer should begin their first treatment within 62 days'.

Tables 4 and 5 report on the performance of Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland, and the reporting of waiting times by tumour site, respectively, towards this 62 day target for the months of January, February and March 2010.

Table 4: Reporting on the 62 day waiting time target from an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer to treatment, for all cancers in Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland⁵

January - March 2010									
	No. of patients first treated for Cancer following an urgent GP referral for Suspected Cancer								
	Treated within 62 days from receipt of Referral			Total			Percentage (%)		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Jan	Feb	Mar	Jan	Feb	Mar
Belfast	37.0	47.0	62.0	44.0	58.5	75.0	84.1	80.3	82.7
Northern	26.0	32.5	41.0	30.0	37.5	43.0	86.7	86.7	95.3
Southern	22.0	22.5	20.0	23.0	23.5	20.0	95.7	95.7	100.0
South Eastern	26.5	26.0	52.5	29.0	26.5	53.5	91.4	98.1	98.1
Western	28.5	33.0	28.5	30.0	35.0	29.5	95.0	94.3	96.6
Northern Ireland	140	161	204	156	181	221	89.7	89.0	92.3

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

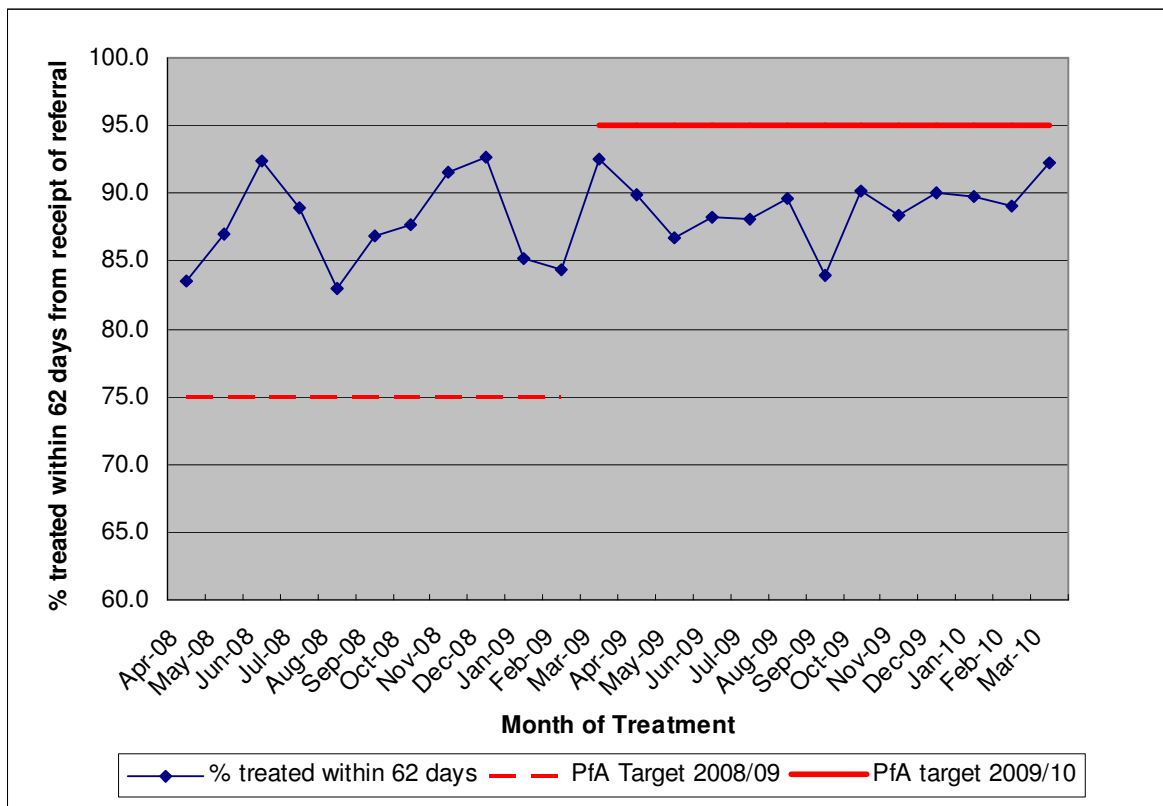
⁵Refer to Technical Notes – points 1, 9-11.

- The 2009/10 PfA target that 95% of patients urgently referred by a GP with a suspected cancer should begin their first treatment within 62 days was not met during the months of January, February or March for Northern Ireland.
- The target was met by the Southern HSC Trust for all three months, the South eastern HSC Trust in February and March 2010, the Western HSC Trust in January and March 2010 and the Northern HSC Trust in March 2010. The Belfast HSC Trust failed to meet the target in all three months.
- During the month of January 2010, of the 156 patients that commenced treatment for cancer following an urgent referral for suspected cancer (including routine referrals subsequently reclassified as urgent by a cancer specialist), 140 (89.7%) were treated within 62 days. Of the 16 patients that were not treated within 62 days, there were the equivalent of seven in the Belfast HSC Trust, four in the Northern HSC Trust, one in the Southern HSC Trust, 2.5 in the South Eastern HSC Trust and 1.5 in the Western HSC Trust.
- In February 2010, 161 (89.0%) of a total of 181 patients were treated within 62 days. Of the 20 patients that were not treated within 62 days, there were the equivalent of 11.5 in the Belfast HSC Trust, five in the Northern HSC trust, one in the Southern HSC Trust, 0.5 in the South Eastern HSC Trust and two in the Western HSC Trust.
- In March 2010, 204 (92.3%) out of 221 patients were treated within 62 days. Of the 17 patients that weren't treated within 62 days, the equivalent of 13 were in the Belfast HSC Trust, two in the Northern HSC Trust, one in the South Eastern Trust and one in the Western HSC Trust.

Trends⁶

The reporting of the 62 day waiting time target began in April 2008. There was an upward trend between the months of April to June 2008 in the number of patients treated within 62 days, to a position in June 2008 where 92.4% of patients were treated within 62 days following an urgent referral for suspected cancer. Performance then decreased over the next two months, with 83.0% of patients treated within 62 days in August 2008. This was the waiting time position's lowest point since reporting of the target began. From then the percentage treated within 62 days fluctuated, peaking in March 2009, with 92.6% of patients treated within 62 days. Since December 2009 the percentage treated within 62 days of an urgent referral of cancer has remained fairly constant increasing to 92.3% during March 2010. The performance target has not been met in Northern Ireland since it was increased in March 2009, from 75% to 95% of patients to be treated within 62 days following an urgent referral for suspected cancer.

Figure 3: Percentage of patients treated within 62 days following an urgent referral for suspected cancer – Monthly Trends April 2008 to March 2010⁶



Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

⁶Refer to Technical Notes – point 12.

Table 5: Reporting on the 62 day waiting time target from an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer to treatment, by tumour site⁷

January - March 2010

Cancer Site	No. of patients first treated for Cancer following an urgent GP referral for Suspected Cancer								
	Treated within 62 days from receipt of Referral			Total			Percentage (%)		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Jan	Feb	Mar	Jan	Feb	Mar
Brain Central Tumour	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Breast Cancer	42	54	55	42	54	55	100.0	100.0	100.0
Gynae Cancers	7	9	7	7	10	7	100.0	90.0	100.0
Haematological Cancers	3	4	4	3	4	4	100.0	100.0	100.0
Head/Neck Cancer	5	8	8	5	8	10	100.0	100.0	80.0
Lower Gastrointestinal Cancer	17	8	23	22	13	26	77.3	61.5	88.5
Lung Cancer	11	15	19	17	18	20	64.7	83.3	95.0
Sarcomas	0	0	0	0	1	0	N/A	0.0	N/A
Skin Cancers	24	34	24	24	35	24	100.0	97.1	100.0
Upper Gastrointestinal Cancer	4	5	9	7	6	10	57.1	83.3	90.0
Urological Cancer	26	22	53	28	30	62	92.9	73.3	85.5
Other	1	2	2	1	2	3	100.0	100.0	66.7
Northern Ireland	140	161	204	156	181	221	89.7	89.0	92.3

Source: Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS)

⁷Refer to Technical Notes – points 1, 9-11, & 13-14.

- During the month of January 2010, 16 of the 156 patients waited longer than 62 days for treatment following an urgent GP referral for suspected cancer. Six of these patients were diagnosed with lung cancer, five with lower gastrointestinal cancer, three with upper gastrointestinal cancer, and two with urological cancer.
- During February 2010, of the 20 patients who were waiting longer than 62 days, eight were diagnosed with urological cancer, five with lower gastrointestinal cancer, three with lung cancer, one with gynaecological cancer, one with upper gastrointestinal cancer, one with skin cancer and one with a sarcoma.
- There were 17 patients that were not treated within 62 days of receipt of referral during the month of March 2010. Of these patients nine were classified as having urological cancer, three as having lower gastrointestinal cancer, two as having head/neck cancer, one as having lung cancer, one as having upper gastrointestinal cancer, and one as having a tumour site classed as 'Other'.

Technical Notes

1. The sources of data contained in this bulletin are the Departmental Return SDR 2 (Table 1) and the Cancer Patient Pathway System (CaPPS) (Tables 2-5).
2. Data contained in Table 1 relates to all urgent referrals (excluding those that have been reclassified as routine by the breast specialist) for suspect breast cancer, and routine referrals that have subsequently been reclassified as urgent by a breast specialist. Figures also include all patients living outside Northern Ireland and all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health and Social Care hospitals.
3. The completed waiting time in Table 1 is measured from the date an initial breast cancer referral is first received by the Provider HSC Trust, and ends on the date that the patient attended their first outpatient appointment with a breast cancer specialist. Adjustments are made to the completed waiting time in the event of a patient cancelling or failing to attend a first outpatient appointment.
4. Figures provided in Table 1 reflect all urgent referrals for breast cancer both from GP's and other practitioners. The 2009/10 target states that from April 2009, all urgent breast cancer referrals should be seen within 14 days. Between March 2008 and February 2009 this target applied only to referrals that were initially referred by a GP.
5. Data contained in Tables 2 and 3 relate to patients who received a first definitive treatment for cancer (having been given an 'International Classification of Diseases 10' diagnosis) during the months of January, February and March 2010, irrespective of their source of referral. Data include treatment for all cancers, with the exception of basal cell carcinoma. Figures also include all patients living outside Northern Ireland and all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health and Social Care hospitals. Patients that have not been given an ICD 10 diagnosis are excluded.
6. The completed waiting time in Tables 2 and 3 is measured from the date a decision was taken to treat a patient for cancer and ends on the date that the patient received their first definitive treatment for cancer. Adjustments are made to the completed waiting time in the event of a patient cancelling or self deferring treatment or as a result of suspension for either medical or social reasons.
7. Table 3 reflects the number of patients that were treated in 31 days or less for each Tumour site. Tumour sites are an aggregation of applicable ICD 10 codes.
8. The PfA target stating that 98% of patients should wait no longer than 31 days from the date on which the decision to treat was taken to the date of first definitive treatment has remained unchanged since its introduction in March 2008.
9. Data contained in Tables 4 and 5 relate to all patients who received a first definitive treatment for cancer (having been given an ICD 10 diagnosis) during the months of January, February and March 2010, following an urgent referral for suspect cancer from a General Practitioner, and routine GP referrals that have subsequently been reclassified as urgent by a cancer specialist. Data relate to urgent GP referrals for all cancers with the exception of basal cell carcinoma. Figures also include all patients living outside Northern Ireland and all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health and Social Care hospitals. Referrals from sources other than a GP, routine referrals from a GP and patients who have not been given an ICD 10 diagnosis are excluded.

10. The completed waiting time in Tables 4 and 5 is measured from the date an initial urgent referral for suspect cancer from a GP is received by the Provider Health and Social Care Trust and ends on the date the patient received their first definitive treatment for cancer. Adjustments are made to the completed waiting time in the event of a patient cancelling or self deferring treatment or as a result of suspension for either medical or social reasons.
11. The measurement of a patient's waiting time in Tables 4 and 5, from initial urgent GP referral to first definitive treatment, includes cases in which a patient was initially referred to a particular Health and Social Care Trust for consultant assessment but was then subsequently transferred to another Health and Social Care Trust for treatment. In such cases, the responsibility for reporting that patient is shared, with 0.5 allocated to the Trust where the patient was first seen for assessment and 0.5 to the Trust of first treatment. For example, if a patient is initially referred for assessment in the South Eastern HSC Trust and is then transferred to the Belfast HSC Trust where they receive treatment 50 days after their initial GP referral, both the South Eastern and Belfast HSC Trusts will report 0.5 of a patient waiting less than 62 days. Similarly, if such a patient waited over 62 days for treatment, both the Trust where the patient was first seen and the Trust where the patient was treated would report 0.5 of a patient waiting more than 62 days.
12. Between April 2008 and February 2009, the Priorities for Action Target relating to waiting time for treatment following an urgent GP referral for suspected cancer required that 'at least 75% of patients urgently referred with a suspect cancer should begin their first definitive treatment within 62 days of GP referral'. From March 2009 this target increased to 95% of patients. These different targets are reflected in the trend graph for the 62 day target.
13. Table 5 reflects the number of patients that were treated in 62 days or less for each tumour site. Tumour sites are an aggregation of applicable ICD 10 codes.
14. Information on the grouping of ICD10 Codes by tumour site is available from Hospital Information Branch on request.
15. Information on waiting times for the months of April, May and June 2010 will be published on 30 September 2010.
16. Data contained within this publication are Official Statistics.

Additional Information

Further information on waiting lists in Northern Ireland is available from:

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