

Minutes from Cross Party Group on Cancer Meeting

May 13th 2014

8.00 – 9.00am, Conference Room 24, Ty Hywel Assembly Building.

How we measure the quality of cancer outcomes in Wales.

Agenda

8 am - Julie Morgan AM, Chair, introduced the meeting.

8.10 am - Dr Dyfed Huws, Director, Wales Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit, Public Health Wales, gave a presentation on the Wales Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit's recent report into cancer incidence, mortality and survival in Wales.

8.20am - Gwenllian Griffiths, Head of External Affairs, Macmillan Cancer Support gave a presentation on the First Wales Cancer Patient Experience Survey.

8.30am - Dr Tom Crosby, Clinical Director at Velindre and Medical Director of the South Wales Cancer Network, talked about the peer review of cancer services in Wales.

8.40 am - discussion

Presentations

Dr Dyfed's presentation highlighted that the incidence rate of cancer is 20 per cent higher in the most deprived areas of Wales, compared to the least deprived, and Lung cancer accounted for almost 22% of all cancer deaths in 2012.

He also highlighted that Cancer mortality rate is over 50% higher in most deprived areas of Wales compared to the least deprived.

Gwenllian Gritffiths gave an overview of the first cancer patient experience survey in Wales which found that 89% of those surveyed rated their overall care as either excellent or very good. The survey also showed the huge positive impact having a clinical nurse specialist or a key worker has on the experiences of people living with cancer.

However, it also highlighted areas for improvement as a third of people were not given the name of a key worker and only 22% were given a written care plan, both of which are commitments in the Welsh Government's Cancer Delivery Plan.

Dr Tom Crosby outlined how professional peer review focuses on the performance of professionals, with a view to improving quality, upholding standards, and that it should be used by Welsh Government, commissioners, NHS managers, clinical teams, the third sector, patients, carers and the public to understand where the delivery of cancer care is of high quality and where service improvements are required.

Full presentations are attached.

Discussion

Cancer Incidence and mortality – There were concerns about how Wales' cancer incidence and survival rates are fairly close to the bottom of the European averages.

Dr Crosby said that if we could raise our rates up to the European average, 300 extra lives in Wales would be saved each year, and if we became above average it would be 600.

Early diagnosis and inequalities – Members of audience were also concerned that Wales is 28th out of 29 countries for five year survival rates for lung cancer, with only Bulgaria as having a lower figure. And that too many patients are presenting late or not at all, so early diagnosis and primary care oncology has to be a huge priority.

There was also discussion of how the system could cope with extra referrals, and how services and access is worse in the areas where people present late, and aren't as aware of cancer prevention messaging, and where there is also poor diet, obesity and smoking. There is also need to consider rural deprivation and access.

Gwenllian Griffiths added that the cancer patient experience survey showed a slight worse experience in deprived areas and among patients with low literacy levels so cancer information is not getting across in these areas.

Rare cancer - it was pointed out that the less common cancers account for nearly half of all the total cancer cases, but that there is not as much information and support for patients with a rarer cancer, for example there is only one MDT on brain cancer. It was felt that standards need to be put in place for rarer cancers accords the UK.

Dr Tom Crosby said that we have the information in Wales on rare cancers, is it just that there is a lack of coordination and strategic planning.

9.10am meeting closed.