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Title: Rate of chest x-rays (CXR) 12 months prior to diagnosis of lung cancer

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Body: Introduction Lung cancer is the most common cause of cancer related death in the UK. This is largely due to patients presenting with locally advanced or metastatic disease at the time of diagnosis. Identifying why patients are presenting late and targeting interventions toward improving early detection could therefore have a significant effect on outcomes. Aim To analyse the number of CXRs performed in the 12 months prior to a diagnosis of lung cancer according to stage at presentation. Method We reviewed 315 patients with a thoracic malignancy between Jan 2010 and Feb 2011. Number of CXRs in the year prior to diagnosis and stage of disease at presentation were recorded. We examined the proportion of patients that had fewer than 2 CXRs in that year for each stage of disease. These results were then compared using a Chi square test. Results After exclusions, 259 cases of non-small cell lung cancer were analysed. The results are compiled in Table 1 below. A significant proportion of patients presenting with later stage disease had fewer than 2 CXRs in the year prior to diagnosis than those with early stage disease ($p=0.019$).

Table 1

	<2 CXRs	%	2 or more CXRs	%	Total
Stage I/II	25	40	37	60	62
Stage III	24	49	25	51	49
Stage IV	90	61	58	39	148

Conclusion It appears that patients with later stage disease are having fewer CXRs in the year prior to diagnosis than those with earlier disease. The result probably calls for increased awareness of lung cancer symptoms by both primary care physicians and general public, to facilitate early referral to secondary care. There is ongoing analysis into rates of GP consultation and antibiotic prescriptions in these patients to assess whether this could be a targeted area for intervention.