

Analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the presentation and treatment of newly diagnosed cancers in the Isle of Man

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Introduction:

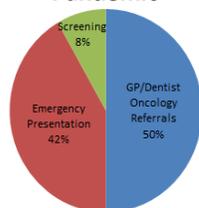
The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in widespread changes to healthcare provision and patient behaviours (1)(2). The implications of the pandemic have been evident in cardiology and respiratory services (3)(4). It has been hypothesised that the pandemic will have implications on oncological services as well (5). This audit analyses the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the presentation and treatment of newly diagnosed cancers in the Isle of Man, to improve the Oncology service during the anticipated second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Method:

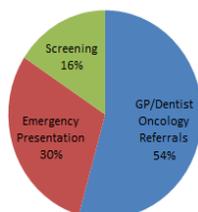
We conducted a retrospective review of patients who were newly diagnosed with Cancer between the dates of the first and last case of COVID-19 on the Isle of Man, during the first wave of the pandemic (19/3/20-18/5/20). The following data were collected: demographics; cancer site; diagnosis; staging; route of referral; date of receipt of referral; date of diagnosis; treatment type and intent. The same retrospective review was carried out on the same cohort of patients who presented at the corresponding time period during the previous year.

Results:

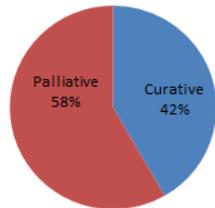
Referral Route COVID-19 Pandemic



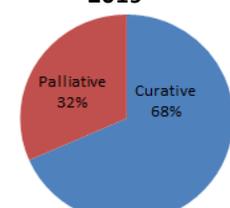
Referral Route 2019



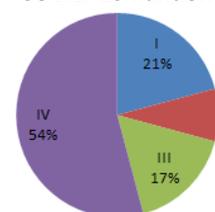
Treatment Intent COVID-19 Pandemic



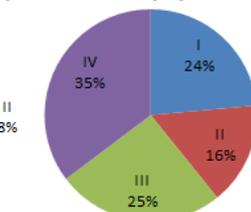
Treatment Intent 2019



Stage of Cancer at diagnosis COVID-19 Pandemic



Stage of Cancer at diagnosis 2019



Site of Cancer	COVID-19 Pandemic	2019
Lung	33% (8)	12% (7)
Breast	4% (1)	32% (18)
Urology	21% (5)	12% (7)
Colorectal	17% (4)	9% (5)
Upper GI	12% (3)	14% (8)
Haematology	13% (3)	7% (4)
Head and Neck	0% (0)	5% (3)
Gynaecology	0% (0)	5% (3)
Skin	0% (0)	4% (2)
Total	24	57

Key Findings during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- There was a reduction in the number of patients presenting with a new diagnosis of cancer
- The majority of patients who were referred to the oncology service did so via GP referrals
- There was a reduction in the proportion of referrals to the oncology service from screening
- There was an increase in the proportion of emergency referrals to the oncology service
- The majority of patients had Stage IV cancer at diagnosis
- The majority of patients were treated with palliative intent
- Lung Cancer was the most common site of newly diagnosed cancer

Conclusions:

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in patients presenting with a new diagnosis of cancer in a non-traditional manner and at a later stage in their disease. Presentation of cancer through an emergency admission and diagnosis at a later stage is associated with poorer outcomes for patients (6)(7). The audit does not appear to identify a clear cause for the findings; therefore, further studies should be carried out with larger populations to gain a greater understanding of the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on oncology services and find solutions to improve services in the future.

References

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