

An announcement by Macmillan nurse

Island nurse says everyone can play a role in tackling lung cancer awareness

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For immediate release.

A Macmillan nurse from the Isle of Wight is urging the public to get behind lung cancer awareness month this November by being signs and symptoms aware.

Emmaline Cornwell, a Macmillan lung cancer clinical nurse specialist based at the Isle of Wight NHS Trust says; 'On average, Macmillan Cancer Support estimate 122 people will be diagnosed with lung cancer every day in the UK¹. Almost 40% of these people will be diagnosed after an emergency admission to hospital².

'A big problem is that people don't always associate their symptoms with lung cancer and assume that they are normal, everyday ailments. Worryingly, half of those diagnosed experienced symptoms for more than three and a half months before they sought medical advice³. That's particularly common with people who smoke, who may just dismiss what they consider to be a smoker's cough.

'Early diagnosis can, in some cases, mean the difference between whether curative treatment is an option or not. The top three signs to look out for are a persistent cough/change in cough pattern, coughing up blood, or chest pain⁴. Although these symptoms can have other causes, it is best to get them checked by your GP. They may be able to put your mind at rest. Or if they think it might be cancer, it's always best to be diagnosed as soon as possible.'

The call for awareness follows Macmillan Cancer Support's new analysis in March which identified that UK survival rates are lagging ten years behind some other European Countries, with lung cancer a particular problem. The CONCORD-2 global study⁵ identified that for lung cancer, Austrian survival rates in the 1990s were better than the survival rates the UK has been able to achieve to date (14% for Austrian patients diagnosed 1995-99 compared with 10% for UK patients diagnosed 2005-09). Emmaline concludes; 'Early diagnosis is one area where we can do more. Just by being aware of key symptoms, and encouraging friends or family members to get checked out if they recognise the signs in them you could help play a part - particularly in the over 65 age group who are more at risk and may be less aware.'

Macmillan is only able to support posts like Emmaline's thanks to the generosity of those who fundraise and give their time to help. If you'd like to support Macmillan on the Isle of Wight, please contact the Fundraising Support Centre on **0300 1000 200** between 9am-5pm Monday-Friday, or email fundraising@macmillan.org.uk

Cancer is the toughest fight many people will ever face, and the feelings of isolation and loneliness that so many people experience make it even harder. But you don't have to go through it alone. If you have any worries or questions about lung cancer, visit www.macmillan.org.uk or call Macmillan free on 0808 808 00 00.