

# Publication Report



## GP consultations for breast symptoms

September to November 2012

Publication date – 26 March 2013

### About this Release

This is an early release of GP consultations data to provide information about the impact of a recent government campaign.

In September 2012 the Scottish Government launched the Breast Cancer Awareness campaign as part of the wider Detect Cancer Early programme to improve cancer survival rates in Scotland. The Breast Cancer Awareness campaign ran for six weeks and aimed to encourage women to see their GP straight away about any changes to their breasts. It overlapped with Breast Cancer Awareness month which is organised by the breast cancer charities each October to increase awareness of the disease.

There is no specific information available on the numbers of women consulting their GP with early symptoms of breast cancer in Scotland. However there is information from a sample of general practices on the numbers of women consulting with a range of breast symptoms, including lumps, pain and infection, including many which will not necessarily be associated with breast cancer. This data has been used to calculate estimates for Scotland which are published here.

We do not know how many of the women who consulted with these breast symptoms went on to be diagnosed with breast cancer. Breast cancer incidence statistics for the year 2012 are due to be published by ISD in 2014.

This publication includes data since April 2012 which has not yet been released as National Statistics and may be revised before the annual GP consultations publication later this year (for example if we receive more data).

### Key Points

- During the period September to November 2012, around 21,000 women consulted their GP with breast symptoms such as lumps, pain and infection. This is an estimate based on a sample of GP practices, so the exact figure could be anywhere in the range 18,300

to 23,700. During the same period in 2011, the number of women consulting with these symptoms was around 13,900 (range 12,300 to 15,500).

- Many more women consulted their GP during the period September to November 2012 than during previous quarters or the same period in 2011. This corresponds with the timing of the Breast Cancer Awareness campaign.
- Consultations for breast symptoms such as lumps, pain and infection reached a peak in October 2012. During this month these symptoms accounted for around 0.56% of all consultations, compared to 0.35% in October 2011.

The full publication tables are available [here](#).

## Background

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in Scotland, affecting over 4,000 women each year. In 2010 breast cancer accounted for 29% of all cancers in women. Cancer survival rates in Scotland fall short of those in other European countries and it is likely that late presentation and advanced stage at diagnosis contribute to this.

ISD collects information about GP consultations from a sample of 6% of practices through the Practice Team Information (PTI) programme. Practices submit monthly data about face-to-face consultations between patients and a GP or practice employed nurse. This data is used to compile estimates for Scotland, and published annually on the [ISD website](#). The next release is scheduled for autumn 2013.

## Contact

### Judith Stark

Principal Information Analyst

[judith.stark@nhs.net](mailto:judith.stark@nhs.net)

0131 275 7562

## Further Information

Further information about GP consultation statistics is available on the ISD website [here](#).

Cancer statistics for Scotland are available on the ISD website [here](#).

Further information about the Detect Cancer Early campaign can be found [here](#).

### About ISD

Scotland has some of the best health service data in the world combining high quality, consistency, national coverage and the ability to link data to allow patient based analysis and follow up.

Information Services Division (ISD) is a business operating unit of NHS National Services Scotland - and has been in existence for over 40 years. We are an essential support service to NHSScotland and the Scottish Government Health Department and others, responsive to the needs of NHSScotland as the delivery of health and social care evolves.

### Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of 'Official Statistics'. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The Code of Practice is produced and monitored by the UK Statistics Authority which is independent of Government. Under the Code of Practice, the format, content and timing of statistics publications are the responsibility of professional staff working within ISD.

Further information on ISD's statistics, including compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and on the UK Statistics Authority, is available on the [ISD website](#) [www.isdscotland.org/About-ISD/About-Our-Statistics/](http://www.isdscotland.org/About-ISD/About-Our-Statistics/)