



Pat Hanlon, kidney cancer survivor

'Blood in Pee': How nurses can support the new national campaign

naedi.org/beclearoncancer/bloodinpee

This autumn the NHS launches a national campaign to raise awareness of blood in urine as a symptom of bladder and kidney cancers. We need your help to diagnose cancer earlier.

What is *Be Clear on Cancer*?

Be Clear on Cancer aims to improve early diagnosis of cancer by raising awareness of symptoms and encouraging people to see their GP earlier.

What is the main message of the new campaign?

If you notice blood in your pee, even if it's 'just the once', tell your doctor.

Who is the campaign aimed at?

Men and women **over the age of 50** from lower socioeconomic groups, and their friends and family.

When will the campaign launch?

Adverts will appear on national TV, radio and in the press from 15 October to 20 November 2013. There will be events in public places, like shopping centres, and a letter and leaflet will be sent to people in key areas across England.

Research tells us that men and women may respond differently to finding blood in their urine. Women might pass it off as a urinary tract infection (UTI) while men might ignore the symptom if it happens 'just the once', so there are different adverts for men and women.

Why focus on the symptom 'blood in pee'?

Visible haematuria is a key symptom of around eight in 10 bladder cancers and more than half of kidney cancers. Yet, only just over a third of people know that unexplained bleeding is a sign of cancer.

Be Clear on Cancer campaigns aim to use everyday language to help people feel more comfortable when discussing symptoms with their GP. During testing, the word 'pee' was universally accepted.

How do you know the campaign will work?

Three local pilots in 2012 have shown encouraging results:

- 23% increase in 2 Week Wait (2WW) referrals for suspected urological cancer in the pilot area*
- Total cystoscopy figures for 18 PCTs covered by the local pilots indicate a 5.9% increase compared with the same months in 2011
- 5.3% increase in the number of bladder or kidney cancers diagnosed following a 2WW urgent referral for suspected urological cancer within the pilot area

Results from a regional pilot, which ran from January to March 2013, have also been positive:

- The percentage of respondents saying they would see the GP the same day if they noticed any changes to pee or bladder habits significantly increased from 18% to 27%; this was particularly the case for men, where the increase was from 21% to 32%
- Knowledge of blood in urine as a definite warning sign of kidney/bladder cancer significantly increased amongst the target audience from 41% to 65%; this increase was seen in both men and women
- 28% increase in 2WW referrals for suspected urological cancer*

*Pathway covers several urological cancer types in addition to kidney and bladder

What role do nurses have in supporting the campaign?

An extremely important one. People can delay going to see their GP for a variety of reasons, including not thinking their symptoms are serious. Patients may be more willing to open up to you. Reassure them that it's okay to get symptoms checked out.

Keep a look out for patients most at risk as part of your day-to-day work, for example during specialist clinics, such as those for women, or new patient checks.

If you are treating people for long term conditions, you're in an ideal position to ask patients if they have noticed any unexplained symptoms or are concerned about anything else.

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'Some people might mention that they've noticed blood in their urine during a routine appointment, even if they've actually come in for something else, but others could need prompting by asking: 'Is there anything else you'd like to talk to me about today?' or 'have you heard about the Blood in Pee campaign?' If a patient comes to see you – whether it's with recurring urinary tract infections or someone who's only experienced the symptom once – suggest they visit the GP. It's not normal to have unexplained blood in your urine. That's the message we need to get across.'

Kerry Gunn, Practice Nurse, Berkshire

'When I told my wife I'd noticed blood in my pee, she said I should see my doctor as soon as possible. I wasn't sure, as it wasn't painful, but I'm glad I listened to her.'

Pat Hanlon, aged 70, kidney cancer survivor

Key bladder and kidney cancer facts

- If kidney and bladder cancers are diagnosed at the earliest stage, between 92–97% of people survive for one year. When diagnosis is at a late stage, this figure drops to just 25–34%
- Around 16,600 people in England are diagnosed with bladder or kidney cancer each year and around 7,500 will die from them
- If the number of people in England who survive bladder and kidney cancers for five years matched the best in Europe, around 1,000 lives could be saved each year

Who is most at risk of bladder and kidney cancers?

Around 95% of people diagnosed with bladder or kidney cancers are 50 and over. Other risk factors include:

- smoking – the most important cause of both cancers
- being overweight or obese – it's thought that rising obesity rates could be part of the reason behind the rise in kidney cancer incidence over recent years
- having worked in certain manufacturing jobs that involved the use of dyes, diesel and some other chemicals increases the risk of bladder cancer
- being on kidney dialysis
- having a family history of bladder or kidney cancer

Bladder cancer symptoms

- **Haematuria**
- **Needing to pass urine very often or suddenly**
- **Pain when passing urine**

Kidney cancer symptoms

- **Haematuria**
- **A constant pain below the ribs**
- **Swelling in the abdomen**
- **Other symptoms include unexplained weight loss, high temperature, night sweats, a general sense of feeling unwell, or tiredness**

Assessment and referral

If you have concerns about a patient, encourage them to make an appointment with their GP without delay. Recent research found that women were more likely than men to see their GP three or more times before being referred for diagnostic tests for bladder and kidney cancers, even in the presence of macroscopic haematuria. And if you find blood whilst testing a urine sample, make sure the patient's GP is always informed – even if it's only a small amount.

NICE referral guidelines recommend making an urgent 2 Week Wait referral, if: a patient has blood in their urine that is painless; is over 40 and comes to see you with a recurrent or persistent UTI associated with blood in urine; or they have this symptom but no identifiable infection. Encourage patients to let you know how they get on with the GP and to come back if symptoms don't improve.

How are GPs and hospitals preparing for the national 'Blood in Pee' campaign?

NHS Improving Quality will work with the Strategic Clinical Networks (SCNs) to help ensure primary and secondary care colleagues are prepared for an increase in patients being referred for tests and treatment. There are additional briefing sheets to support GPs and NHS trusts.

Three things you can do

1 Make every contact count. The campaign may prompt people who have ignored symptoms or have had recurring UTIs to talk to you. But they may be afraid, embarrassed, or worry they're wasting your time. If a patient comes to see you about something else, ask if they have any other concerns. It's a great opportunity to discuss healthy lifestyle changes too. If you are caring for patients in the community, take campaign leaflets with you.

2 Give permission. Our target audience can delay going to see their GP and often seek permission to make an appointment. Where relevant, encourage patients to visit their doctor. Suggest they see their GP again if their symptom doesn't go away. For extra reassurance, tell them to mention that the nurse sent them. It may be the push they need to get themselves checked out. Recommend they come back and tell you how they got on.

3 Encourage your colleagues to support the 'Blood in Pee' campaign. Encourage people you work with to watch the TV adverts on NHS Choices and make sure they know that briefing sheets are available. Brief health care assistants about the campaign so they can bear it in mind in their day-to-day work. Be prepared for more patients mentioning symptoms to you as a result of the campaign.

Find out more

- **Visit naedi.org/beclearoncancer/bloodinpee for more information for health professionals**
- **Direct members of the public to the *Be Clear on Cancer* campaign website: nhs.uk/bloodinpee**