



## British Sarcoma Group Conference 2009

### ABSTRACTS – POSTERS

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#### **Changing referral patterns for sarcoma patients in the Northern & Yorkshire region**

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#### **Objectives**

Sarcomas are optimally treated in designated centres. We previously identified where delays in referral occurred in our region in 1999-2000. The aim of this study was to identify if recent NICE guidelines had lead to a change in referral patterns for patients with sarcoma.

#### **Methods**

Anonymous data for patients with non-gynaecological sarcoma between 2000 - 2004 was obtained from the Northern & Yorkshire Cancer Registry, relating to diagnosis, specialty of first referral, number of hospitals attended and whether the patient was ultimately seen in a designated sarcoma centre.

#### **Results**

1430 patients of median age 55 years were identified in three three cancer networks. 86.2% of all patients were treated in a designated sarcoma centre compared to 59.8% in the previous study. Of 504 patients with complete data, 39 patients were referred within 2 weeks. 626 of 1180 (53%) patients were diagnosed within two weeks of attending the first hospital. Of the 948 referred to a second hospital, 195 (20.5%) were seen within two weeks of attendance at the first hospital, (median 38 days). Of the 631 referred to a third hospital, 187 (29.6%) were seen within two weeks. Delay in onward referral ranged from 14 to 127 days.

#### **Conclusions**

There was a statistically significant increase in referral rates to specialist centres compared with the previous study, possibly as a result of NICE guidelines. Some patients however are still experiencing significant delays.