

HOW SERIOUS ARE “SERIOUS NON-SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS (SNSS)”: EVALUATION OF THE INTRODUCTION OF A LOCAL SNSS PATHWAY, AND GASTROINTESTINAL CANCER PICK UP RATES WITHIN THIS POPULATION

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A single-centre audit of 502 patients referred via serious non-specific symptom cancer pathways found an 8.6% cancer detection rate, comparable to existing urgent suspected cancer pathways.

KEY POINTS

- Weight loss was the most common presenting symptom (74.1% of referrals), with 7.5% of these patients diagnosed with cancer
- The overall cancer pick-up rate was 8.6% (43 of 502 patients), similar to the approximately 7% detection rate of existing urgent suspected cancer pathways
- The most common cancers detected were upper gastrointestinal (25.6%), lung (23.3%), and haematological malignancies (11.6%), with 37.2% of cancers already metastatic at diagnosis
- Almost 6% of referrals were inappropriate as they met criteria for pre-existing system-specific cancer pathways, suggesting a need for improved awareness of existing referral criteria
- The authors conclude that the pathway appears valuable for assessing vague symptoms not meeting pre-existing diagnostic criteria, though long-term survival outcomes remain unclear

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