

AN EVALUATION OF THE EAST OF ENGLAND VAGUE SYMPTOMS MULTIDISCIPLINARY DIAGNOSTIC CENTRE PILOT

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INTRODUCTION

- Patients who present to primary care with non-specific (vague) but concerning symptoms are more likely to be referred on multiple pathways before appropriate diagnostic cancer investigations are carried out¹.
- This results in a delay in cancer diagnosis and timely access to treatment with a negative impact on patients' quality of life¹.

- The East of England Vague Symptoms Multidisciplinary Diagnostic Centre Project was a three site pilot and formed part of the second wave of the Accelerate, Coordinate, Evaluate (ACE) national programme in United Kingdom.
- The service was provided at: Mid Essex NHS Trust (Broomfield Hospital, Chelmsford), Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust (Ipswich Hospital, Ipswich) and East & North Hertfordshire NHS Trust (Lister Hospital, Stevenage).

AIM

- To provide a rapid route to diagnostic investigations for patients who present to primary care with non-specific, but concerning symptoms and who do not meet the two week wait (2WW) referral criteria for cancer in the East of England region.

METHOD

- This service was evaluated using data obtained from each of the three participating sites. Patient experience survey, aligned with the National Cancer Patient Experience Survey (NCPES) of the United Kingdom, was also conducted.

MAIN FINDINGS

- In total, 322 referrals were received across the three sites with more females (58%) than males referred.
- An average of ten referrals were received per month at Mid Essex, six at East & North Hertfordshire and seven at Ipswich over the one year pilot.
- Mean age of service users was 69years (range: 23 – 97years)
- Main presenting complaint was unexplained weight loss across the sites with 26% of the patients at Mid Essex, 22% at East & North Hertfordshire and 30% at Ipswich, presenting with three or more vague symptoms.

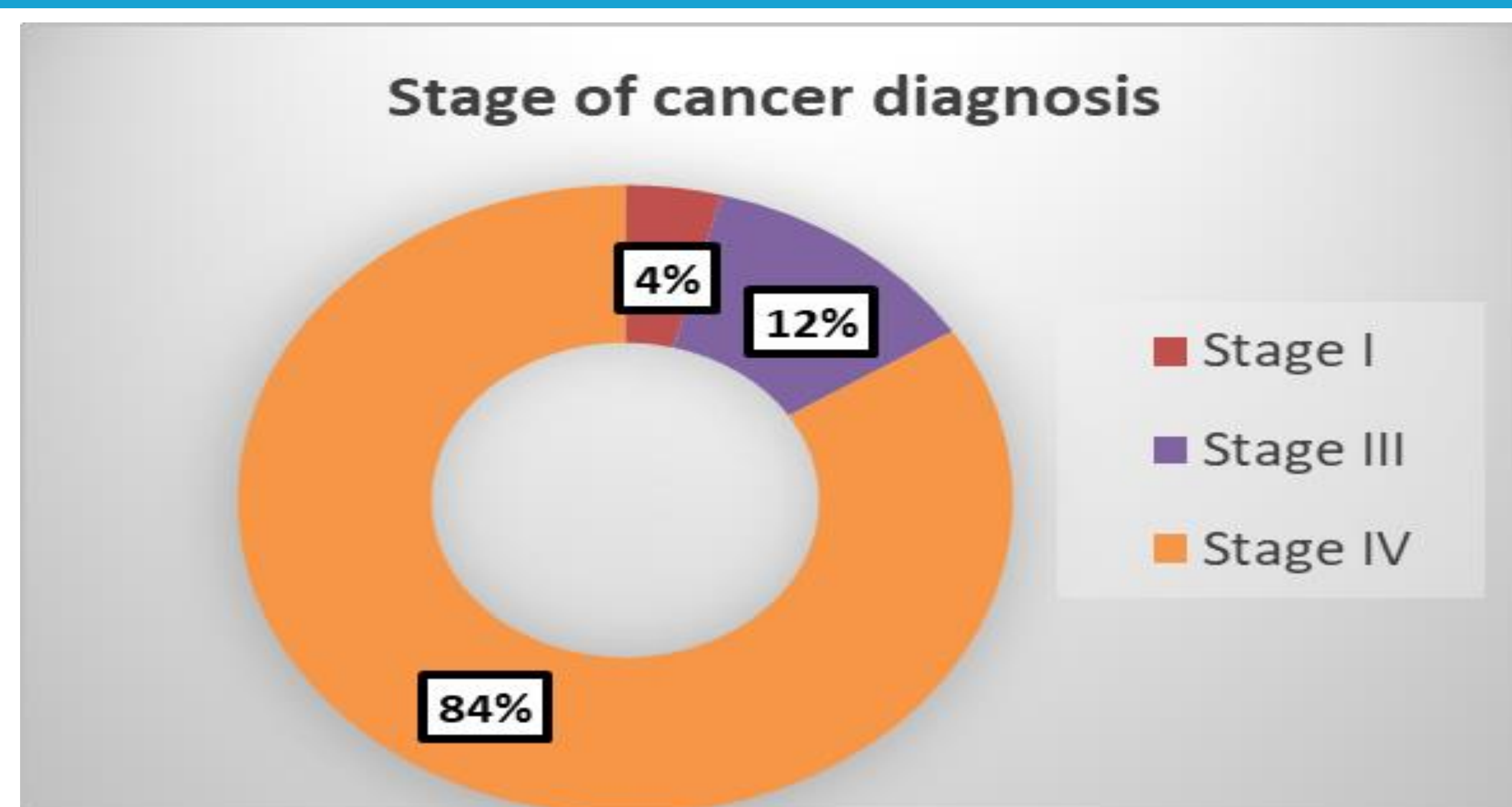


Table 1: Service uptake and clinical outcomes

Item	Composite	Trust		
		Mid Essex	East & North Hertfordshire	Ipswich
Referrals, n	322	129	83	110
Referrals seen in pathway, n (%)	285 (89)	110 (85)	77 (93)	98 (89)
Inappropriate referrals, n (%)	22 (7)	4 (3.6)	6 (7)	12(11)
Cancer Diagnosis, n (%)	26 (9.1)	10 (9.1)	10 (13)	6 (9.2)*
Non-Cancer Diagnosis, n (%)	92 (32)	27 (25)	35 (45)	30 (46)*

*calculated with respect to the 65 patients who attended their diagnostic investigations

Patient experience survey

- Median rating for patient satisfaction with service was 8, 9 and 10 out of 10 at the Mid Essex, East & North Hertfordshire and Ipswich sites, respectively.

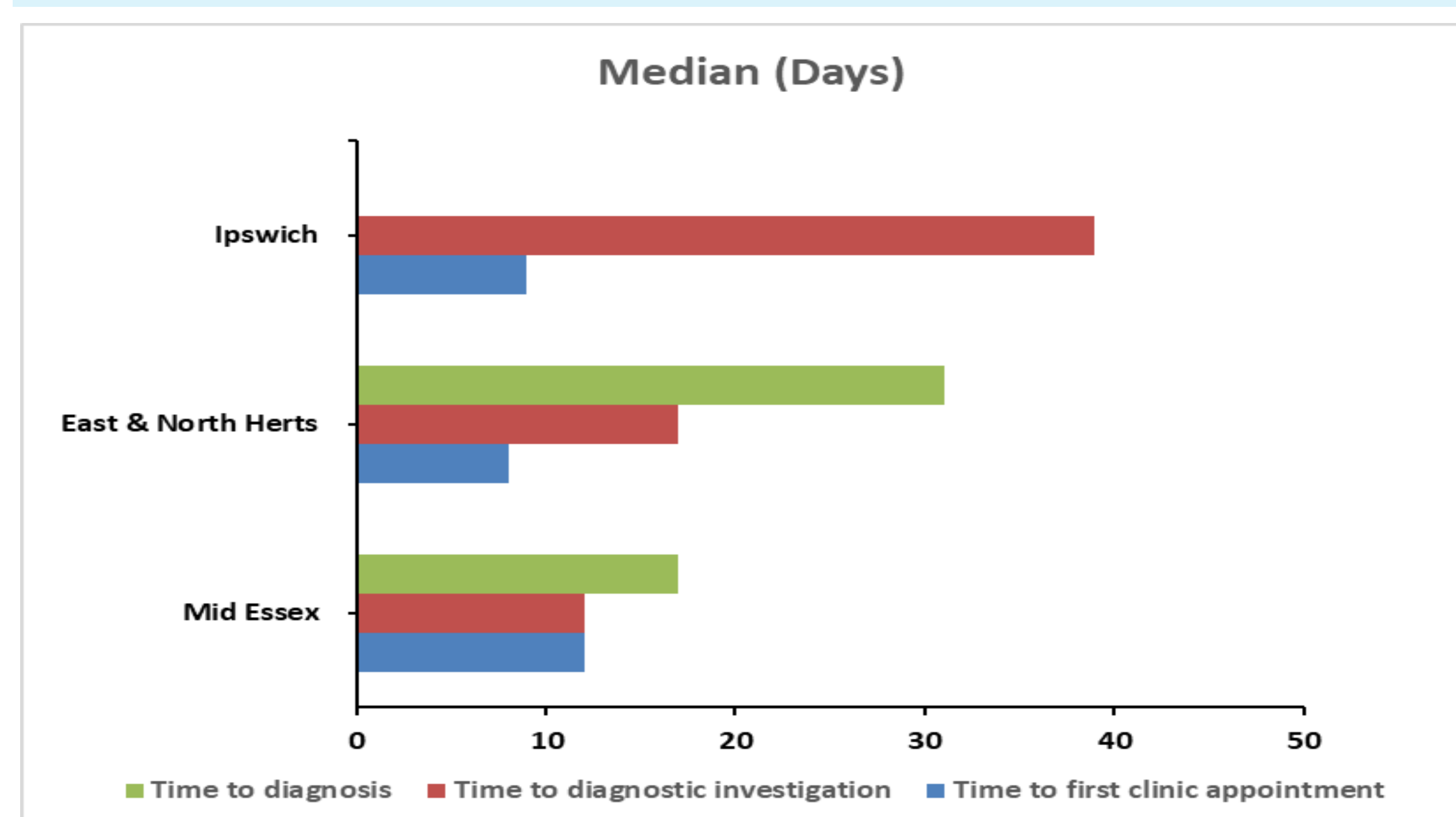
Table 2: Respondents' rating of service

Respondents' Rating	Trust		
	Mid Essex (n=35)	East & North Hertfordshire (n=38)	Ipswich (n=20)
Appropriate info. was provided by GP prior to referral, n%	74	55	50
Visited GP three or more times with symptoms prior to referral, n%	49	32	30
Diagnostic findings was communicated promptly, n%	89	74	75
Info. & support received on pathway was good or very good, n%	91	88	100

Reference

1 NHS England. Achieving World-Class Cancer Outcomes: A Strategy for England 2015-2020. A report of the Independent Cancer Taskforce. 2015. http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/sites/default/files/achieving_world-class_cancer_outcomes_-_a_strategy_for_england_2015-2020.pdf. Accessed March 18, 2018.

Figure 1: Pathway performance



*Time to diagnosis was not available for the Ipswich site, first clinic appointment also corresponded to scheduled diagnostic investigations for the Mid Essex site.

- Sixteen types of cancer were diagnosed and the most common was non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (15%).
- Non-cancer diagnosis included gastroenterology (48%), respiratory (18%), genitourinary (5%) and a range of other endocrine, reproductive and neurological - related pathologies.

CONCLUSION

- The Mid Essex and East & North Hertfordshire sites achieved first clinic appointment within 14days for all the patients in the cancer cohort.
- Time to diagnostic investigations and diagnosis was within four weeks for all the cancer patients seen at Mid Essex and for the majority seen at the East & North Hertfordshire and Ipswich sites.