

Pancreatic cancer charity welcomes move to bring pharmacists into GP practices

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Pancreatic Cancer Action, which exists to save lives through early diagnosis of one of the UK's deadliest cancers, has welcomed the initiative to introduce an "army" of pharmacists into GP practices.

Leading health professionals from Royal College of General Practice (RCGP) and Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS), said the plan would see pharmacists providing health advice and being able to prescribe medication with additional training.

Every year, almost 9000 men and women will be newly diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and due to late diagnosis, they will be faced with a shockingly low three per cent chance of survival and an average life expectancy of just three to six months.

Ali Stunt, Chief Executive and rare survivor of pancreatic cancer, said: "This is would be a very positive step for easing the pressure on GP practices and help attribute to early diagnosis.

"The biggest problem with the diagnosis of pancreatic cancer is that there is no one clear indicator of the illness. There are, however, clusters of symptoms in the early stages that should raise alarm bells.

"By introducing pharmacists into GP practices, this will be an additional route to diagnosis and contribute to improving survival rates for this grim disease. I am survivor myself and am determined more people will have the same lucky outcome as I did."

The charity currently have an RCGP accredited training programme for GP and hospital doctors, are planning to introduce one for pharmacists.

Symptoms of pancreatic cancer include persistent, new onset upper abdominal or upper back pain; jaundice; indigestion not responding to medication; pale and smelly stools that don't flush easily and unexplained weight loss. Pancreatic Cancer Action advise anyone who experiences these symptoms, which are not normal for them, to speak to their GP or call 111.

For more information, please visit www.pancreaticcanceraction.org or call 0303 040 1770.

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