

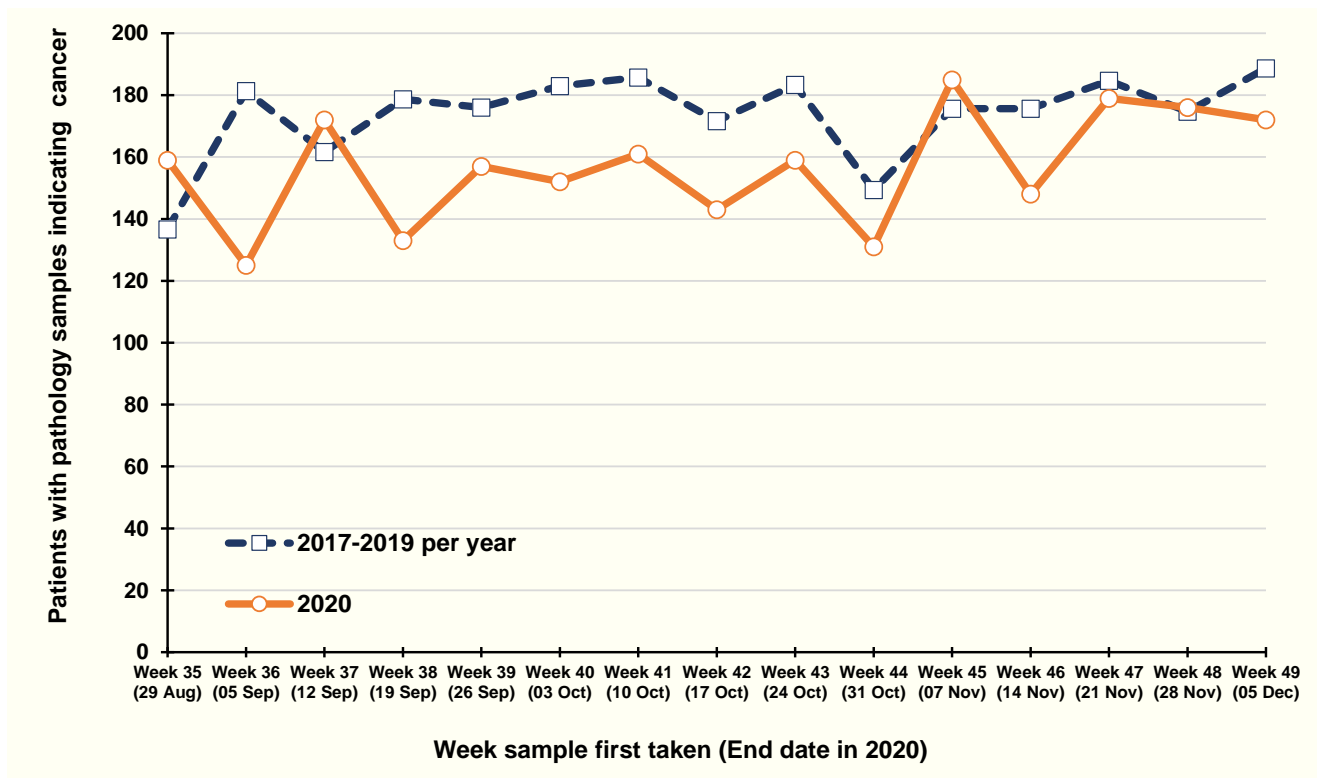
SUMMARY

Recent trends in the number of patients with pathology samples indicating cancer: Dec 2020

- 1) This summary provides an overview of recent trends in the number of patients with pathology samples indicating cancer (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer, NMSC) whose first sample was taken from 1st January 2020 to the week ending 5th December 2020 in Northern Ireland.
- 2) These trends are contrasted with the annual average number of patients with pathology samples indicating cancer (ex NMSC) during 2017-2019 in order to provide an indication of the potential impact of the Covid-19 restrictions on diagnostic cancer services.
- 3) Data are sourced from the four NHS pathology laboratories in Northern Ireland (Belfast, Altnagelvin, Antrim, Craigavon), which are usually provided to the NI Cancer Registry on a monthly basis.

Trends in patients with pathology samples indicating cancer by week first sample taken

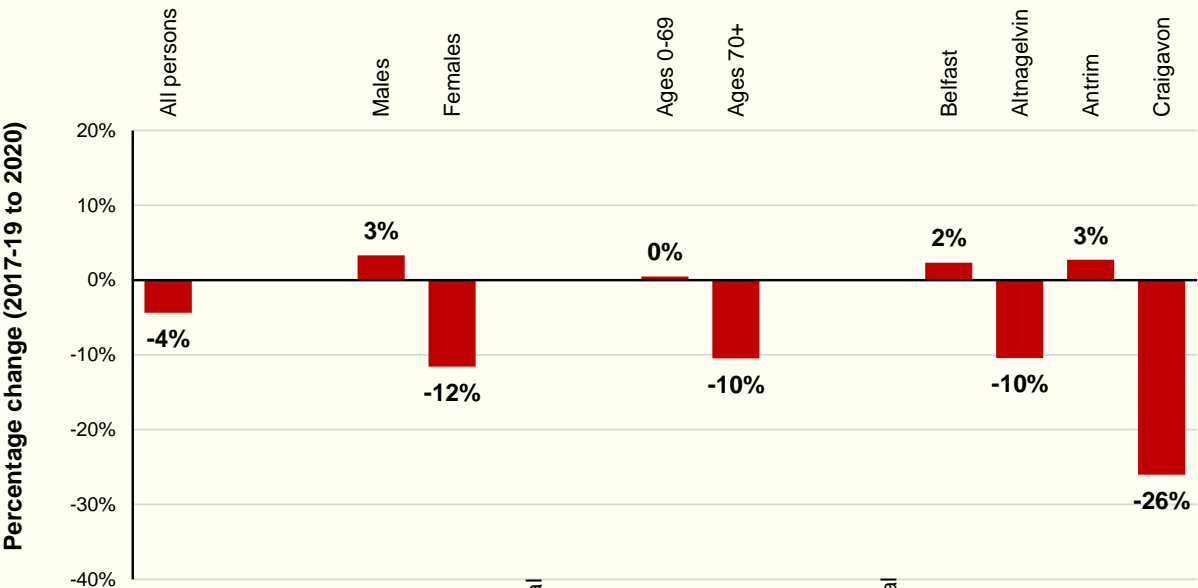
- 4) From 1st March to 5th December 2020, the number of patients with a pathological sample indicating cancer was 19% lower than the average number for the same time period in 2017-2019.
- 5) Based upon the monthly trend in patients with pathology samples indicating cancer, there was an estimated shortfall of 1,300 patients during March-November 2020 compared to the expected number. Some of these "missing" patients may have a clinical only diagnosis (e.g. as a result of an emergency hospital admission).



Percentage change from 2017-2019 to 2020 in the number of patients with pathology samples indicating cancer, first taken in weeks 45-49 of each year (2 November to 5 December in 2020)

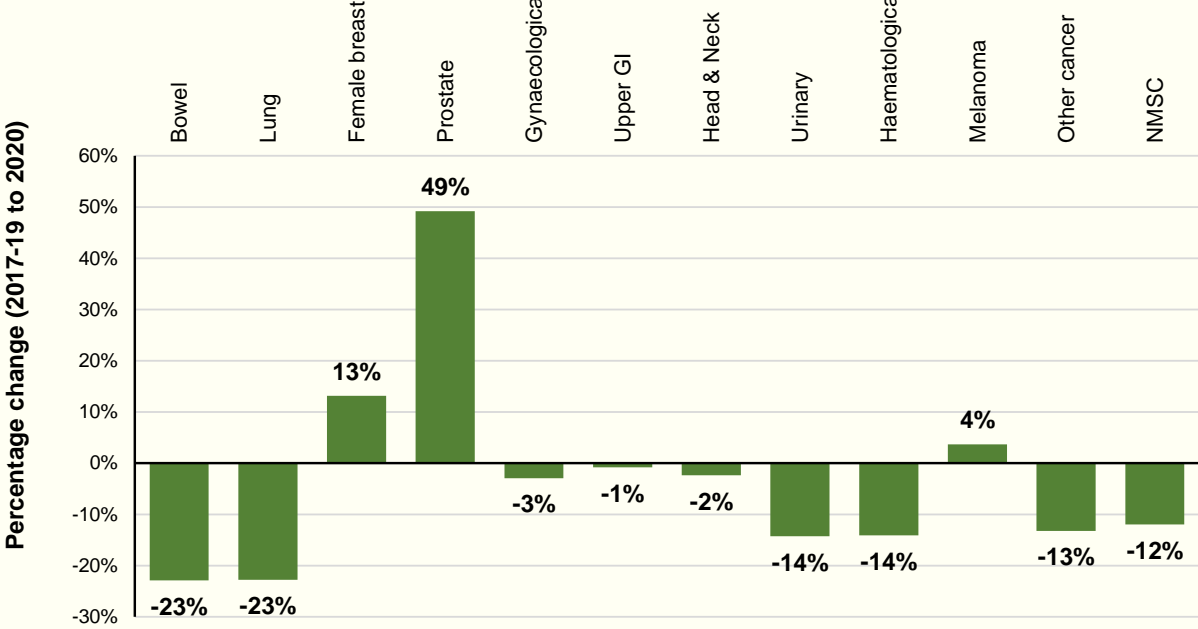
6) Patient demographics

There was a 4% reduction in the number of patients with a pathology sample indicating cancer in weeks 45-49 of 2020, compared to the average value for weeks 45-49 in 2017-2019. However, there was a 3% increase among males compared to a 12% decrease among females. No change was recorded in the number of patients aged 0-69 years, while a decrease of 10% occurred in the number aged 70 and older. Reductions were greatest in Craigavon (26%), with decreases also apparent in Altnagelvin (10%). Small increases were recorded in Belfast (2%) and Antrim (3%).



7) Cancer type

Compared to the annual average for weeks 45-49 in 2017-2019, the number of patients with a pathology sample indicating bowel cancer in 2020 decreased by 23%, while those indicating lung cancer also decreased by 23%. Decreases of approximately 14% occurred for urinary and haematological cancer. However, the number of patients with pathology samples indicating breast cancer increased by 13%, while the number of pathologically diagnosed prostate cancer patients increased by 49%.



Percentage change from 2017-2019 to 2020 in the number of patients with pathology samples indicating cancer, and estimates of the number of "missed" patients in 2020: Patient demographics

Patient demographics	Percentage change from 2017-2019 to 2020 in the number of patients with pathology samples indicating cancer		Estimated number of "missed" patients
	Weeks 45-49 (2 Nov to 5 Dec in 2020)	Weeks 10-49 (1 Mar to 5 Dec in 2020)	At the end of November 2020
All persons	-4%	-19%	1,300
Gender			
Males	3%	-18%	610
Females	-12%	-20%	690
Age			
Ages 0-69	0%	-19%	730
Ages 70+	-10%	-20%	580
Pathology Lab			
Belfast	2%	-13%	420
Altnagelvin	-10%	-23%	290
Antrim	3%	-20%	150
Craigavon	-26%	-33%	440

Notes:
 "Missed" patients may have a clinical only diagnosis (e.g. as a result of an emergency hospital admission).
 "Missed" patients were calculated based upon the difference between the actual and expected number of patients recorded. The latter is determined using the trend in patients diagnosed pathologically from Jan 2017 to Feb 2020, and thus includes any expected increases (or decreases) as a result in annual changes in the number of cases diagnosed (e.g. as a result of population growth and/or ageing).

Percentage change from 2017-2019 to 2020 in the number of patients with pathology samples indicating cancer, and estimates of the number of "missed" patients in 2020: Cancer type

Cancer type	Percentage change from 2017-2019 to 2020 in the number of patients with pathology samples indicating cancer		Estimated number of "missed" patients At the end of November 2020
	Weeks 45-49 (2 Nov to 5 Dec in 2020)	Weeks 10-49 (1 Mar to 5 Dec in 2020)	
All cancers (ex NMSC)	-4%	-19%	1,300
NMSC	-12%	-30%	1,340
Bowel	-23%	-16%	150
Lung	-23%	-27%	150
Female breast	13%	-12%	120
Prostate	49%	-13%	130
Gynaecological	-3%	-19%	90
Upper GI	-1%	-21%	70
Head & Neck	-2%	-21%	70
Urinary	-14%	-13%	30
Haematological	-14%	-10%	70
Melanoma	4%	-25%	130
Other cancer	-13%	-2%	20
<u>Screening age</u>			
Bowel cancer (Ages 60-74)	-23%	-17%	100
Breast cancer (Ages 50-70)	30%	-8%	30

Notes:

NMSC: Non-melanoma skin cancer; GI: Gastrointestinal

"Missed" patients may have a clinical only diagnosis (e.g. as a result of an emergency hospital admission).

"Missed" patients were calculated based upon the difference between the actual and expected number of patients recorded. The latter is determined using the trend in patients diagnosed pathologically from Jan 2017 to Feb 2020, and thus includes any expected increases (or decreases) as a result in annual changes in the number of cases diagnosed (e.g. as a result of population growth and/or ageing).

Other cancers excludes cancer of unknown primary.