

SUMMARY

Recent trends in the number of patients with pathology samples indicating cancer: February 2022

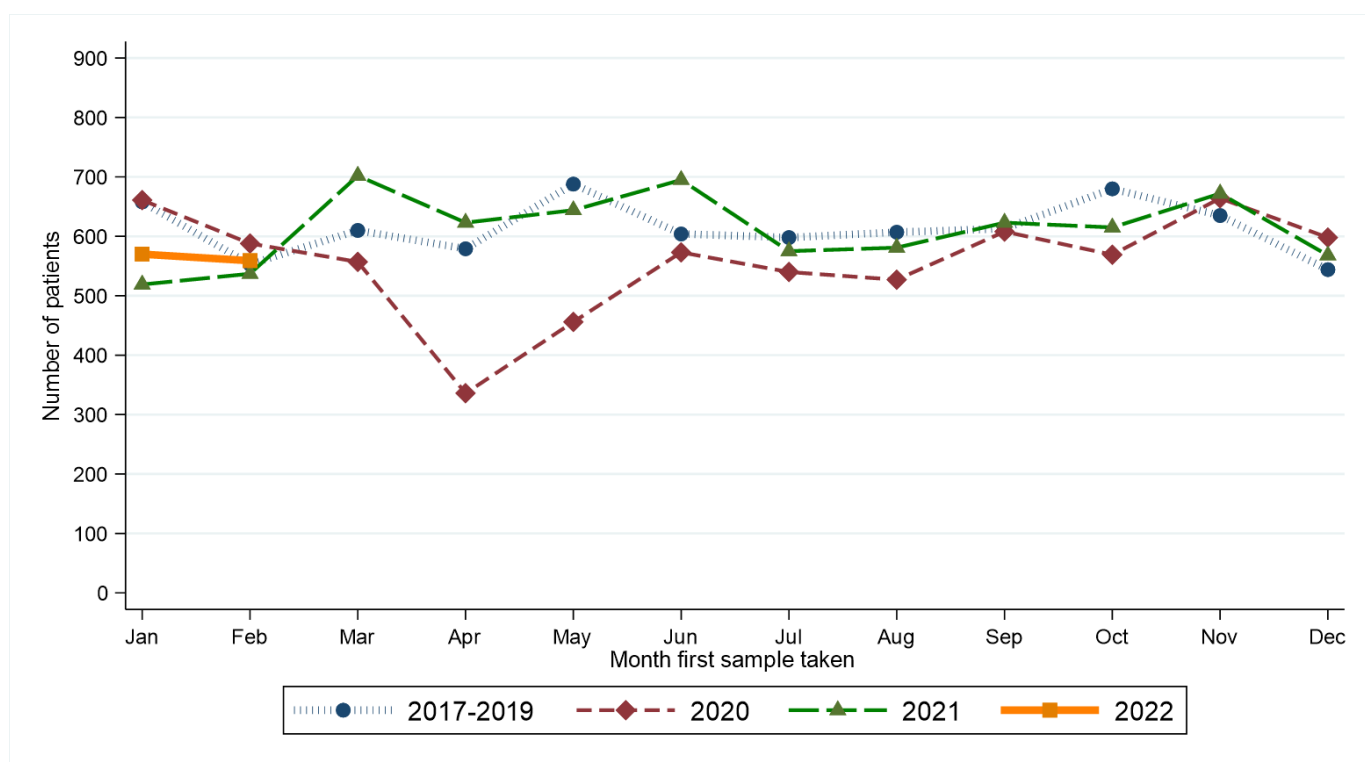
This summary provides an overview of recent trends in the number of patients with pathology samples indicating cancer (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer, NMSC) whose first sample was taken from January 2020 to February 2022 in Northern Ireland.

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.

Data are sourced from the four NHS pathology laboratories in NI (Belfast, Altnagelvin, Antrim, Craigavon), which are usually provided to NICR on a monthly basis. **Altnagelvin laboratory is excluded from some analysis as a change in recording systems led to an undercount in the number of reported samples in Jan-Apr 2021.**

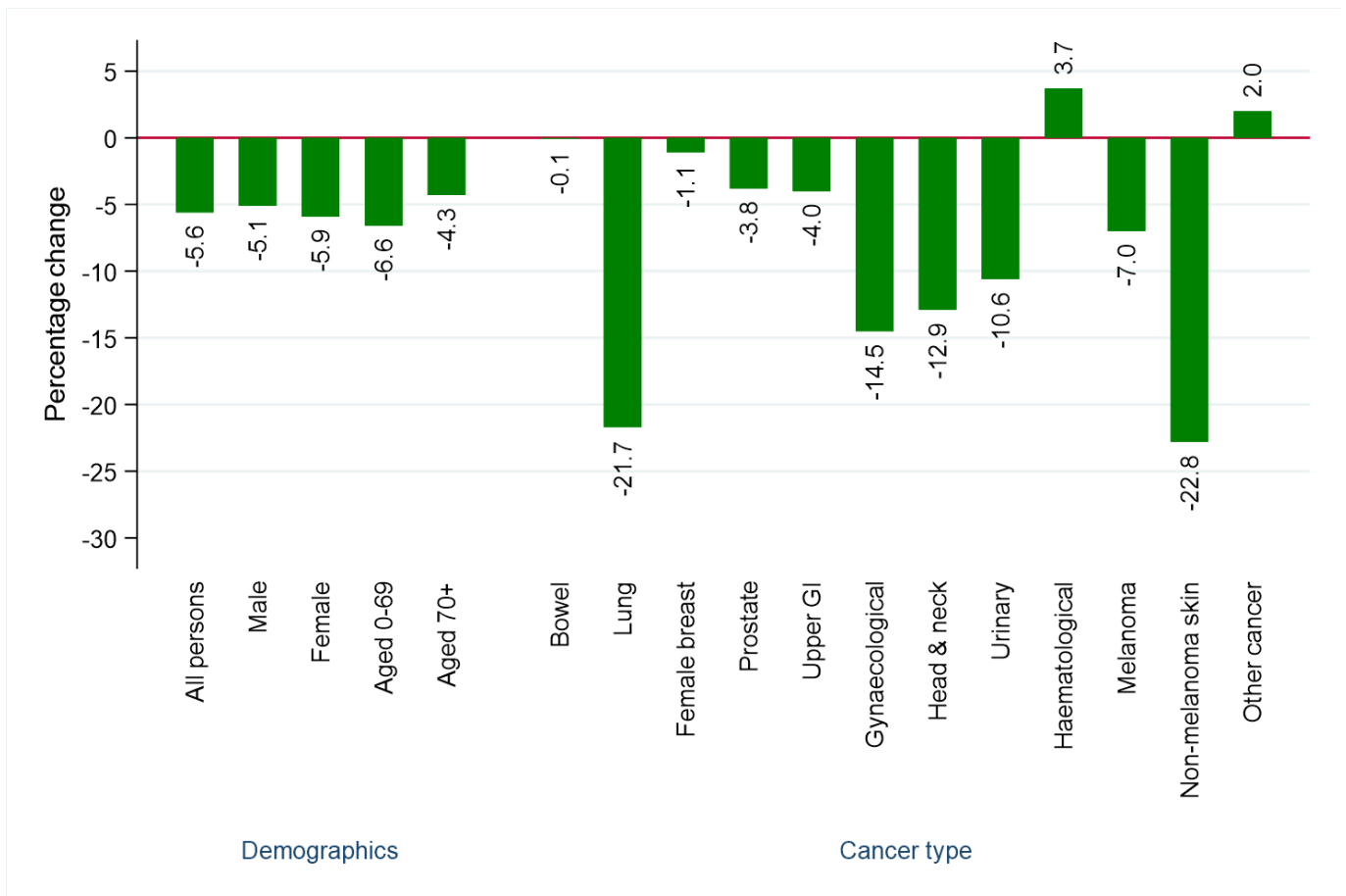
CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS SINCE MARCH 2020 (Excludes Altnagelvin)

From March 2020 to February 2022 the number of patients with a pathological sample indicating cancer (ex NMSC) was 5.6% lower than the average number for the same time period in 2017-2019.



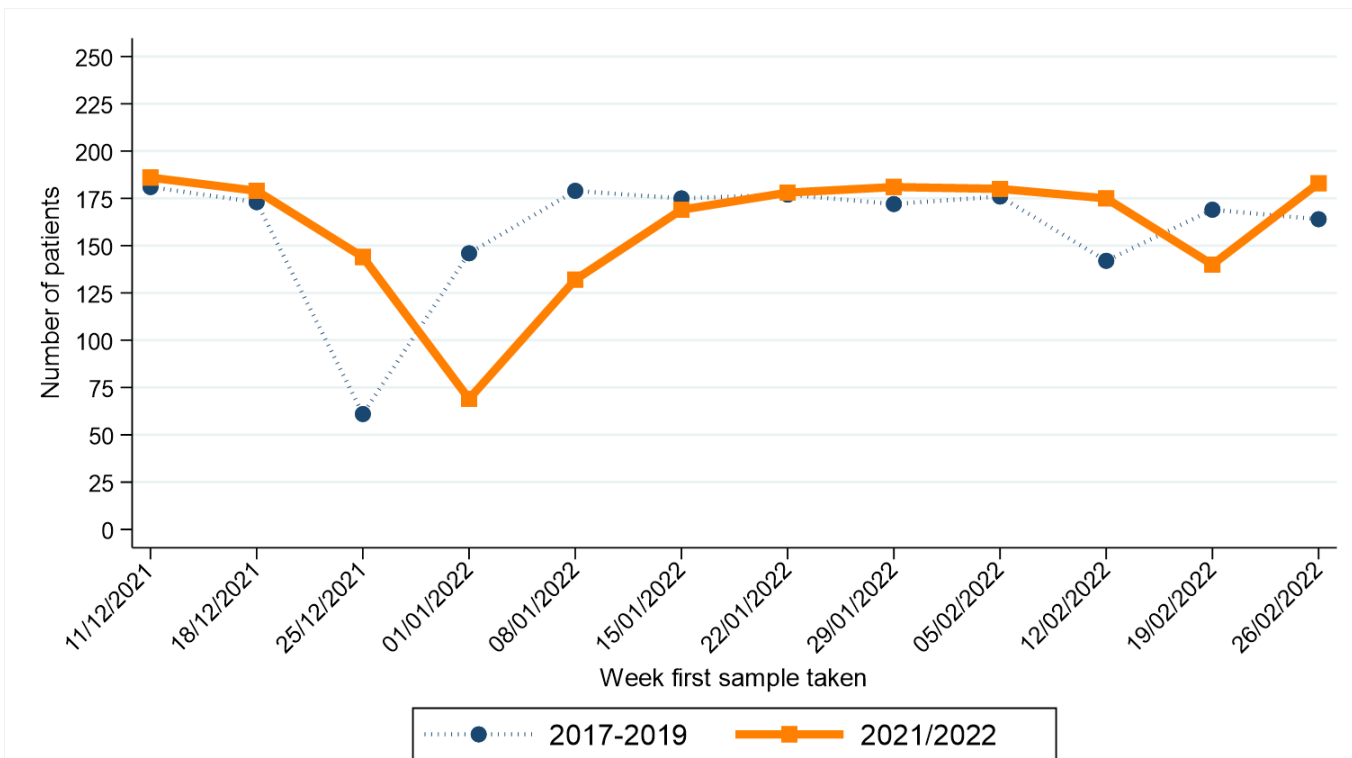
From March 2020 to February 2022 there was a 5.1% decrease among males and a 5.9% decrease among females compared to the same time period in 2017-2019. A decrease of 6.6% occurred in the number of patients aged 0-69 years, while there was a decrease of 4.3% among those aged 70 and older.

Compared to the annual average in 2017-2019, from March 2020 to February 2022 the number of patients with a pathology sample indicating lung cancer decreased by 21.7%. Increases were recorded for haematological cancer, while decreases of more than 10% were recorded for gynaecological cancer, head and neck cancer, urinary cancer and non-melanoma skin cancer.



RECENT CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS (Includes Altnagelvin)

There was a 0.1% increase in the number of patients with a pathology sample indicating cancer in the twelve weeks up to 26/02/2022 compared to the average value in the equivalent weeks in 2017-2019.



Note: Date shown refers to the end date of the week in 2021-2022. Data for previous years refers to the equivalent Sat-Sun week in those years

In the twelve weeks up to 26/02/2022 there was a 3.0% decrease among males and a 2.9% increase among females compared to the same time period in 2017-2019. A decrease of 3.6% occurred in the number of patients aged 0-69 years, while there was an increase of 5.4% among those aged 70 and older.

Compared to the annual average in 2017-2019, in the twelve weeks up to February 2022 the number of patients with a pathology sample indicating lung cancer decreased by 18.9%. Increases were recorded for bowel cancer, prostate cancer, head and neck cancer and melanoma, while decreases of more than 10% were recorded for non-melanoma skin cancer.

