

2024

Dear Practice Manager

INFORMATION FOR ALL GPs

I am a supporter of AMMF, the UK's only cholangiocarcinoma charity, whose mission is to raise the awareness of this devastating disease, to provide information to those who need it and to encourage and support research.

Are you aware of the facts of cholangiocarcinoma?

- It is the second most common primary liver cancer in the world
- 2,635 people were diagnosed with cholangiocarcinoma in 2019 in England alone*
- Fewer than 5% of patients will survive one year from diagnosis
- The incidence is increasing, and we don't know why
- Most patients are diagnosed too late for surgery which, currently, is the only potentially curative treatment

Cholangiocarcinoma starts in the bile ducts, but the symptoms can be vague and insidious – in fact, the early ones may only be slightly abnormal liver function tests. Commonest symptoms are due to blocking of the flow of bile – jaundice, although this may be less obvious in people with darker skin types, dark urine, pale stools, a pain under the right ribs and sometimes itching. There may also be unexplained weight loss, general malaise and fatigue. Whilst several of these symptoms can be non-specific and could be caused by benign conditions, they do require urgent assessment because a missed diagnosis of cholangiocarcinoma could mean the patient then loses the window of opportunity for surgery, which currently is the only potentially curative treatment for this disease.

We need your help. Please, if a patient presents with the symptoms mentioned above, be aware that these could be attributable to cholangiocarcinoma. Published statistics show that this is a disease of the over 60s, but it seems that many younger people are now being affected. Time is of the essence in achieving a diagnosis so that the patient has the best possible chance of life saving surgery.

For more information about cholangiocarcinoma, please visit the AMMF website: **www.ammf.org.uk**

Yours sincerely

Sign here

Name and address of sender for further contact:

**Acknowledgement: NCRAS at NHS England.*