

Harnessing innovation to optimise lung cancer diagnosis for better equity, access and outcomes

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**LUNG CANCER
POLICY NETWORK**



INTRODUCTION

Despite advances in science transforming our understanding of lung cancer, the timeliness and quality of diagnosis are suboptimal, contributing to poor outcomes and unnecessary loss of life.¹ Widespread gaps in access to diagnostic testing and new technologies continue to delay diagnosis and contribute to persistent inequalities in outcomes.²⁻⁴

As the policy landscape for lung cancer evolves, systematic efforts are needed to raise awareness and harness innovation throughout the diagnostic process to help reduce risks, costs and delays.

In 2025, the Lung Cancer Policy Network – a global, multidisciplinary network of experts from the lung cancer and oncology community – assessed the evidence and policy landscape to explore how optimising diagnosis can save lives, improve outcomes and increase access to equitable care.⁵

METHODS

The Lung Cancer Policy Network developed a report that was informed by a review of peer-reviewed and grey literature, interviews with 12 experts and insights from Network members.

These activities took place between May and November 2025, culminating in the development of actionable recommendations to support health system leaders and decision-makers in optimising lung cancer diagnosis.

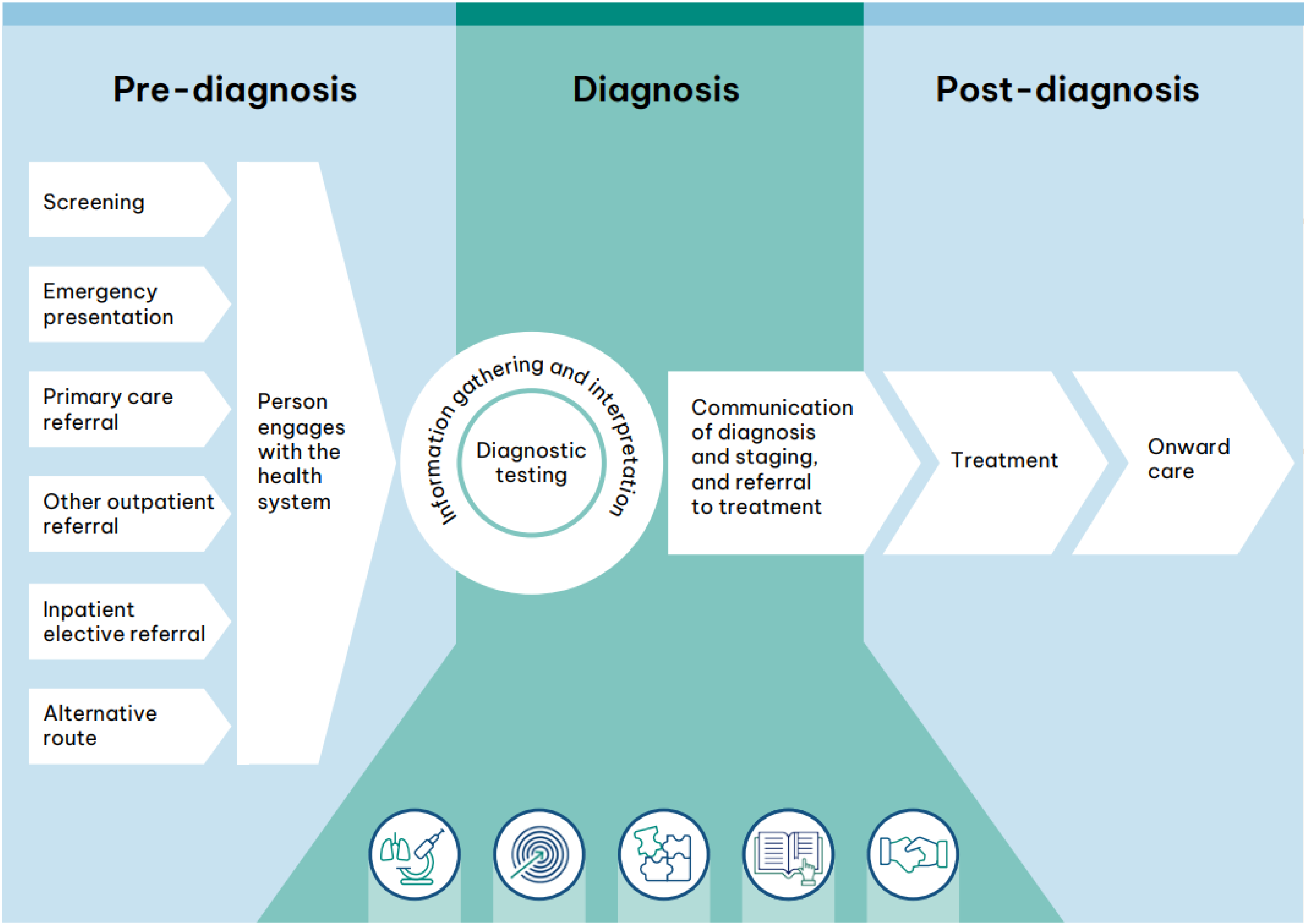
Figure 1. The cancer diagnostic process⁵

RESULTS

A comprehensive approach to diagnosis must be better embedded as a critical component of lung cancer care and reflected in policy and practice across health systems. The Lung Cancer Policy Network recommends streamlining all phases of the diagnostic process (*Figure 1*) through a multifactorial and multidisciplinary approach.⁵

The report – alongside case studies and examples from around the world – recommends actions for health system leaders and decision-makers to optimise lung cancer diagnosis.⁵ These include:

-  • providing dedicated funding to address gaps in diagnosis research and implementation
-  • exploring known and emerging diagnostic biomarkers and technologies, and investigating how they can be integrated effectively and equitably into practice
-  • implementing innovative approaches to reduce diagnostic error and streamline diagnostic processes
-  • incorporating cost-effectiveness analyses and systematic consideration of health system resources and priorities when developing strategies to optimise diagnosis
-  • supporting effective collaboration and communication within and between multidisciplinary teams
-  • ensuring guidance and recommendations for diagnosis reflect the latest evidence, to help improve care experiences and outcomes
-  • implementing a variety of resources to help train and equip healthcare professionals so they can support optimal diagnosis
-  • addressing challenges around reimbursement and knowledge of diagnostic tests to reduce inequalities in access.



Adapted from: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2015. *Improving Diagnosis in Health Care*. <https://doi.org/10.17226/21794>, with permission from the National Academy of Sciences, Courtesy of the National Academies Press, Washington, D.C.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The value of efficient diagnostic processes is increasingly recognised in policy through global and regional initiatives – including the adoption of the integrated lung health resolution at the 2025 World Health Assembly – as well as inclusion in cancer control plans.^{6,7}

The Lung Cancer Policy Network sets out how these commitments can be translated into local strategies and actions. The report discussed in this poster – and its recommendations – support health system leaders and decision-makers to equitably optimise lung cancer diagnosis, ensuring that diagnostic innovations reach everyone. Our progress must be measured by its impact on reducing disparities in access, timeliness and outcomes.

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