

## Send more patients with indigestion for cancer tests, doctors are urged

**Ross Lydall** Health Editor

GPs are being encouraged to refer more patients suffering indigestion and heartburn for tests in an effort to improve survival rates from cancer.

The London Cancer Alliance, which represents 16 NHS trusts, says early detection is key to improving outcomes for patients with oesophageal-gastric (OG) cancer.

More than a third of cases of stomach cancer in the capital are discovered only when patients turn up at A&E. There are about 830 new

cases a year of OG cancer across the London Cancer Alliance area, with 629 deaths in 2011.

In about two-thirds of cases, surgery is not offered as the tumour is at too advanced a stage. Only 15 per cent of patients with oesophageal cancer, and 22 per cent of patients with stomach cancer, survive five years.

The guidance advises GPs to refer more patients for endoscopy. Patients most at risk of OG cancer are men aged 55 or older with a history of smoking, alcohol abuse and obesity.