Detecting Lung Cancer: Presenting Symptoms

TRANSCRIPT & FIGURES
It’s really difficult for patients with lung cancer because the presenting symptoms can look an awful lot like bronchitis – patients tend to cough, patients can cough up streaky blood, patients can have chest discomfort. The difference between a lung cancer cough and a chronic bronchitis cough in a smoker is that it usually lasts a bit longer, it’s a bit deeper, and it’s different than their usual smoker’s cough. The sighting of blood within coughing is certainly a serious sign and should not be disregarded.

Sometimes, though, lung cancer can present with symptoms outside the chest because lung cancer does spread to other parts of the body, so occasionally we’ll get patients presenting with headaches because the cancer has gone from the lung to the brain, or bone pain because the cancer has gone from the lung to the bone. Generalized weight loss is another symptom that we concern ourselves with in patients with lung cancer.
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