UK considers coronavirus-free medical centers to get cancer treatments back on track

Thousands of cancer patients in the UK have had their treatment stopped or delayed because of COVID-19, and with pressures mounting on the health service, Cancer Research UK calls for widespread testing to prevent unnecessary cancer deaths.

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In some cases, already overstretched NHS staff are being directed away from cancer care, towards caring for COVID-19 patients. And in other cases, where a [cancer](#) patient might have a weakened immune system as a result of cancer treatment, it may not be safe for them to go to hospital.

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The NHS in England is developing 'COVID-free' centres and hospitals which will be the key to ensuring that the most urgent cancer patients can receive their treatment quickly, but this will only be possible with widescale and frequent testing of NHS staff and patients.

Although some patients are being tested for COVID-19, testing in some areas is reserved for those who are seriously ill. The concern is that a number of people with the virus may be infectious to others before they show symptoms, so for a hospital to be truly safe to treat cancer patients, we need rapid testing available for all staff and patients, whether showing symptoms of COVID-19 or not, occurring on a routine and repetitive basis.

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