Assessing and referring adult cancers

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Refer using suspected cancer pathway

Non-urgent specialist referral

Abdominal features (discomfort or pain)

- Abdominal pain
  - + Rectal bleeding
  - + Weight loss age 40+
  - age 50+
  - + Weight loss age 60+ colorectal cancer excluded
- Upper abdominal pain age 55+
  - + Weight loss
  - + Anaemia / Thrombocytosis / Nausea / Vomiting
- Dyspepsia age 55+
  - + Weight loss
  - treatment resistant
  - + Thrombocytosis / Nausea / Vomiting

Abdominal features (distension or mass)

- Rectal or abdominal mass
- Upper abdominal mass, consistent with enlarged:
  - gall bladder
  - liver
  - stomach
- Hepatosplenomegaly
- Splenomegaly + Fever / Night sweats / Breathlessness / Pruritus / Weight loss
- Women
  - Abdominal distension persistent / frequent esp. age 50+
  - Ascites +/ pelvic/abdominal mass not obviously uterine fibroids

Abdominal features (bowel transit symptoms)

- Irritable bowel syndrome symptoms in last 12 months age 50+
- Change in bowel habit unexplained age 50+
- Change in bowel habit unexplained
  - + Rectal bleeding
  - age 60+
  - age under 60
- Diarrhoea / Constipation + Weight loss age 60+

Abdominal features (Upper gastrointestinal symptoms)

- Nausea / Vomiting + Thrombocytosis / Weight loss / Reflux
- Dyspepsia / Upper abdominal pain age 55+
- Nausea / Vomiting + Weight loss age 60+
- Reflux + Weight loss age 55+
- Dysphagia

Bleeding

- Rectal bleeding unexplained
  - age 50+
  - + Abdominal pain / Change in bowel habit
  - Weight loss / Iron deficiency anaemia
- Bruising / Bleeding / Petechiae unexplained
- Haemoptysis unexplained age 40+
- Haematemesis

Musculoskeletal

- Back pain age 60+
  - persistent / Bone pain persistent / Unexplained fracture
  - + Weight loss

Neurological

- Loss of central neurological function progressive / sub-acute

Non-specific features of cancer

- Fatigue persistent / Fever unexplained / Infection unexplained persistent / recurrent / Pallor
- Fatigue / Weight loss / Appetite loss + Ever smoked / Exposed to asbestos + age 40+
- Weight loss unexplained
- Appetite loss unexplained
- Deep vein thrombosis
- → Multiple possibilities → Assess for additional features to clarify most likely cancers
- Jaundice age 40+
- Weight loss age 60+ + Diarrhoea / Back pain / Abdominal pain
- Nausea / Vomiting / Constipation / New onset diabetes

Primary care investigation

- non-urgent: Testing for occult blood in faeces
- within 2 weeks: CT scan / Ultrasound
- within 2 weeks / non-urgent: Upper GI endoscopy (direct access)
- within 2 weeks: Ultrasound
- within 48 hours: Full blood count
- non-urgent: Measure serum CA125
- within 2 weeks: Chest x ray
- Full blood count + Blood tests: calcium; erythrocyte sedimentation rate / plasma viscosity
- within 2 weeks: MRI scan / CT scan

Possible cancers

- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Colorectal
- Stomach
- Ovarian
- Oesophageal
- Gall bladder
- Liver
- Leukaemia
- Mesothelioma
- Myeloma
- Lung
- Pancreatic
- Brain/CNS

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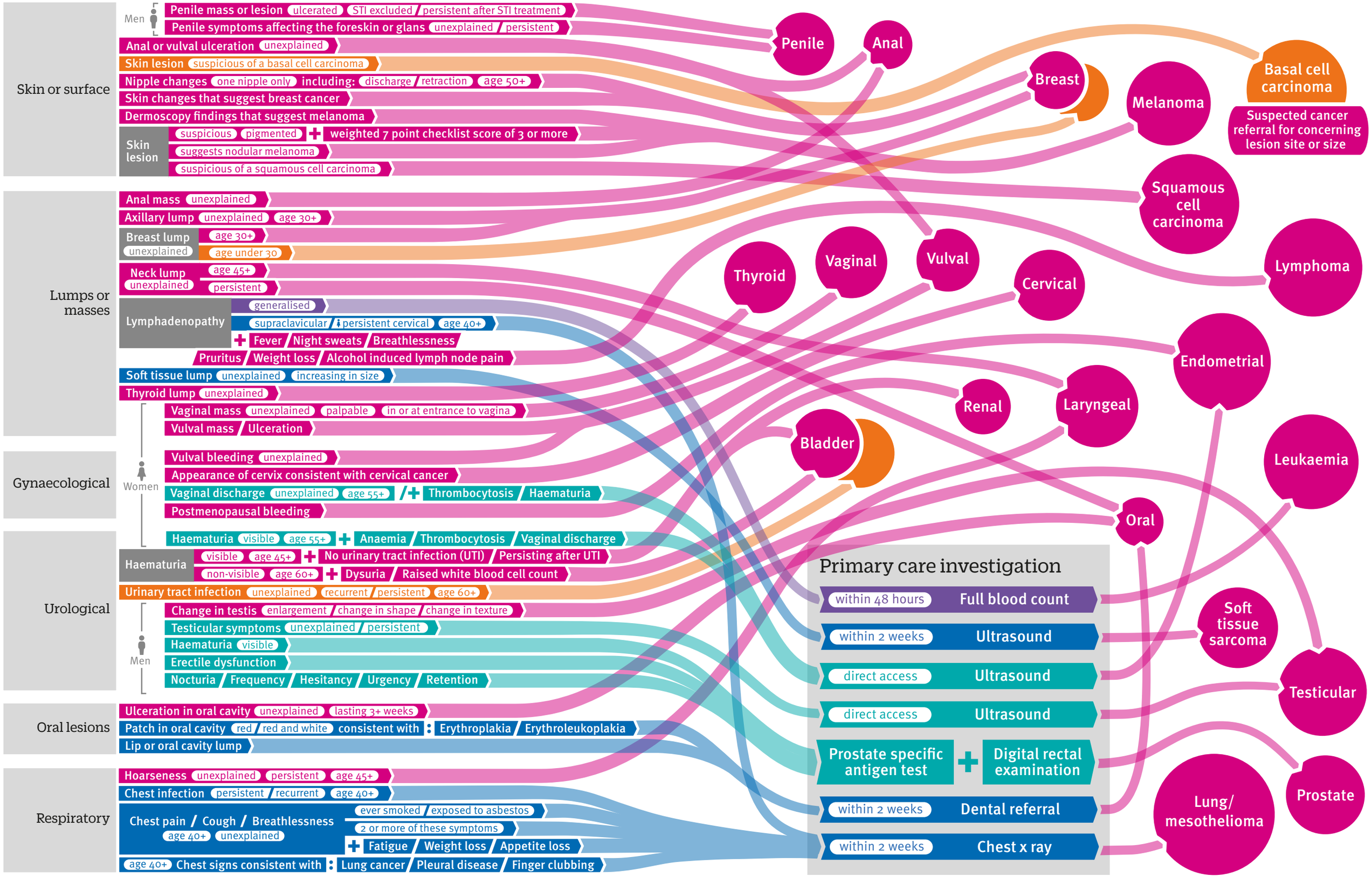

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