



## 11 British Docs Miss Woman's Cancer

The latest story is about a 43-year-old grandmother, Angela Skeffington, who is dying of terminal stomach and liver cancer. According to British newspapers, [11 doctors misdiagnosed](#) the disease. They told her it was menstrual pains, depression, anorexia, and indigestion. According to [The Telegraph](#), one "doctor told her to just 'eat more bananas' during her continued cries for help, which went on for five months.

The terminally-ill grandmother of five said she was treated like a "nuisance" after making cries for help with medics at Heartlands Hospital, Birmingham, and her own GP since April.

She said she was suffering with severe stabbing pains to the stomach, blood in her vomit and stools, plus a loss of appetite.

Mrs Skeffington claimed she was not given a specialist CT scan until a week ago, when the killer disease was finally discovered.

Her stomach cancer has now spread to her liver and lymph nodes, and she has been told there is little hope of recovery.

Medical records show she was seen by 10 doctors during 12 visits to Heartlands Hospital A&E, but suffered repeated misdiagnoses including anorexia, depression and indigestion.

Doctors prescribed her paracetamol, but never admitted her back in for more tests until last week — by which time the lethal illness could not be stopped.

Mrs Skeffington, a former warehouse worker from Yardley, Birmingham, said: "I was made to feel like a nuisance by all the doctors because I kept going back telling them I was still in pain.

"I knew something was terribly wrong and needed help. After a while, my GP told me there was nothing wrong with me and said the staff in A&E were very busy people and I shouldn't keep going there.

"A doctor ... advised me to eat more bananas. Now I find out my body is riddled with tumours and the cancer is terminal.

"I feel like they never gave me any chance to survive."

She didn't. Now, her cancer is inoperable. She has weeks to live.

The story is nothing new for Britons forced to pay for substandard medical care. Commenters at two newspaper websites told stories of a similar fate that befell their loved ones.

Writing at the *Sun* website, commenter [ArmChairCritic wrote](#), "This happened to my grandad 20 years ago. It was suspected he had bowel cancer, but he was told that he didn't. He got fobbed off and guess what he died of bowel cancer." At the *Daily Mail* website, Mel, of Essex, [wrote about](#) his brother: "My brother found a lump he was told there was nothing to worry about — 6 months later he was dead aged 50. His consultant said if he had seen him earlier his treatment could have been a lot different. He worked hard and paid into the system, but when he needed help it was not there."

Angela Skeffington's story is hardly news. But the British system does have its defenders here, such as Nobel Prize-winning economist [Paul Krugman](#), a columnist for the *New York Times*. [Avers Krugman](#), "In Britain, the government itself runs the hospitals and employs the doctors. We've all heard scare stories about how that works in practice; these stories are false."



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