Cancer Statistics

Cancer has a major impact on society in the United States and across the world. Cancer statistics describe what happens in large groups of people and provide a picture in time of the burden of cancer on society.

Statistics tell us things such as how many people are diagnosed with and die from cancer each year, the number of people who are currently living after a cancer diagnosis, the average age at diagnosis, and the numbers of people who are still alive at a given time after diagnosis. They also tell us about differences among groups defined by age, sex, racial/ethnic group, geographic location, and other categories.

Cancer statistics also help us see trends. By looking at cancer rates over time, we can track changes in the risk of developing and dying from specific cancers as well as cancer overall.

For information about chances of surviving cancer and prognosis, see Understanding Cancer Prognosis. NCI also has a collection of statistical summaries for a number of common cancer types.

Although statistical trends are usually not directly applicable to individual patients, they are essential for governments, policy makers, health professionals, and researchers to understand the impact of cancer on the population and to develop strategies to address the challenges that cancer poses to the society at large. Statistical trends are also important for measuring the success of efforts to control and manage cancer.

Statistics at a Glance: The Burden of Cancer in the United States

- In 2024, an estimated 2,001,140 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in the United States and 611,720 people will die from the disease.

- The most common cancers (listed in descending order according to estimated new cases in 2024) are breast cancer, prostate cancer, lung and bronchus cancer, colon and rectum cancer, melanoma of the skin, bladder cancer, kidney and renal pelvis cancer, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, endometrial cancer, pancreatic cancer, leukemia, thyroid cancer, and liver cancer.

- Prostate, lung, and colorectal cancers account for an estimated 48% of all cancers diagnosed in men in 2024. For women, the three most common cancers are breast, lung, and colorectal, and they will account for an estimated 51% of all new cancer diagnoses in women in 2024.

- The rate of new cases of cancer (cancer incidence) is 440.5 per 100,000 men and women per year (based on 2017–2021 cases).

- The cancer death rate (cancer mortality) is 146.0 per 100,000 men and women per year (based on 2018–2022 deaths).

- The cancer mortality rate is higher among men than women (173.2 per 100,000 men and 126.4 per 100,000 women). When comparing groups based on race/ethnicity and sex, cancer mortality is highest in non-Hispanic Black men (208.3 per 100,000) and lowest in non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander women (82.6 per 100,000).

- As of January 2022, there were an estimated 18.1 million cancer survivors in the United States. The number of cancer survivors is projected to increase to 22.5 million by 2032.

- Approximately 40.5% of men and women will be diagnosed with cancer at some point during their lifetimes (based on 2017–2019 data).

- In 2024, an estimated 14,910 children and adolescents ages 0 to 19 will be diagnosed with cancer and 1,590 will die of the disease.

- Estimated national expenditures for cancer care in the United States in 2020 were $208.9 billion. In future years, costs are likely to increase as the population ages and more people have cancer. Costs are also likely to increase as new, and often more expensive, treatments are adopted as standards of care.

Statistics at a Glance: The Burden of Cancer Worldwide

- Cancer is among the leading causes of death worldwide. In 2022, there were almost 20 million new cases and 9.7 million cancer-related deaths worldwide.

- By 2040, the number of new cancer cases per year is expected to rise to 29.9 million and the number of cancer-related deaths to 15.3 million.

- Generally, cancer rates are highest in countries whose populations have the highest life expectancy, education level, and standard of living. But for some cancer types, such as cervical cancer, the reverse is true, and the incidence rate is highest in countries in which the population ranks low on these measures.

U.S. Cancer Mortality Trends

The best indicator of progress against cancer is a change in age-adjusted mortality (death) rates, although other measures, such as quality of life, are also important. Incidence is also important, but it is not always straightforward to interpret changes in incidence. A rise in incidence can reflect a real increase in disease occurrence, such as when an increase in exposure to a risk factor causes more cases of cancer. In such a scenario the increased incidence would likely lead to a rise in deaths from the cancer. On the other hand, the incidence of cancer may rise due to a new screening test that detects many cancer cases that would not have caused a problem during someone's life (called overdiagnosis). In this example, the incidence of the cancer would increase, but death rates would not change.

Mortality trends, when compared with incidence trends, can also provide evidence of improved treatments. If death rates drop faster than incidence (or if death rates drop while incidence is rising), this may reflect the availability of better treatments. For example, statistical evidence suggests that improved treatments have likely made a substantial contribution to recent sharp declines in the lung cancer mortality rate.

In the United States, the overall cancer death rate has declined since the early 1990s. Part 1 of the most recent Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer, released in October 2022, shows that overall cancer death rates decreased by:

- 2.3% per year among men from 2015 to 2019
- 1.9% per year among women from 2015 to 2019
- 1.5% per year among children ages 0–14 from 2015 to 2019

Although death rates for many individual cancer types have also declined, rates for a few cancers have not changed or even increased.

As the overall cancer death rate has declined, the number of cancer survivors has increased. These trends show that progress is being made against the disease, but much work remains. Although rates of smoking, a major cause of cancer, have declined, the rates of other risk factors, such as obesity, have increased in the United States. Also, the U.S. population is aging, and cancer rates increase with age.

The Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program

NCI's Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program collects and publishes cancer incidence and survival data from population-based cancer registries that cover approximately 48% of the U.S. population. The SEER program website has more detailed cancer statistics, including population statistics for common types of cancer, customizable graphs and tables, and interactive tools.

The Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer provides an annual update of cancer incidence, mortality, and trends in the United States. This report is jointly authored by experts from NCI, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Cancer Society, and the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries.

Part 1 of the most recent report included a special section about trends in pancreatic cancer. Part 2, released in September 2023, focused on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on new cases and deaths from certain cancers. For example, new diagnoses of six major cancer types fell sharply from March to May of 2020, at the start of the pandemic. By July 2020, diagnoses of all of these cancer types except one (prostate cancer) had returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Related Resources

Cancer Stat Fact Sheets

SEER Did You Know? Video Series

Finding Statistics by Race/Ethnicity

State Cancer Profiles

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