



CANCER AUSTRALIA

Lung Cancer

Definition

Lung cancer occurs when cells in the tissue of one or both lungs grow abnormally. The abnormal cells form growths called cancers and can originate anywhere in the lungs and airways including the trachea, bronchi, bronchioles and alveoli. Types of lung cancer include small cell carcinoma and non-small cell carcinoma.

Incidence

- Lung cancer was the fourth most common cancer in both men and women in Australia in 2007, with a total of 9703 lung cancers diagnosed in 2007.
- The incidence rate was almost twice as high for men (58 cases per 100,000) than women (31 cases per 100,000) in 2007.
- On average, 16 men and 10 women were diagnosed with lung cancer each day.
- Over the past 26 years (1982-2007) incidence rates have decreased by 32% in men but increased by 72% in women.
- In 2007, the risk of being diagnosed with lung cancer by the age of 85 years was 1 in 12 for men and 1 in 23 for women.
- The mean age at diagnosis is 71 years for men and 70 years for women.
- Lung cancer is the most common cancer in Indigenous men and the second most common cancer in Indigenous women.

Mortality

- Lung cancer was the leading cause of cancer deaths in both men and women in Australia in 2007, with a total of 7626 deaths from lung cancer in 2007.
- On average, 13 men and 8 women die from lung cancer every day in Australia.
- The mortality rate was almost twice as high for men (46 deaths per 100,000) than women (24 deaths per 100,000) in 2007.
- Over the past 26 years (1982-2007) mortality rates have decreased in men but increased in women.
- For 2003-2007, mortality rates were higher for Indigenous Australians, people living in remote areas and those living in the lowest socioeconomic status areas.
- Australia's death rate from lung cancer was significantly lower than the rates for Northern America, Northern Europe and Eastern Asia.

Survival

- Only 13 out of 100 individuals with lung cancer survive five years beyond their diagnosis.
- From 1982–1987 to 2000–2007 in Australia, 5-year relative survival increased from 8% to 11% for men diagnosed with lung cancer and from 10% to 15% for women, but remains very low.

Prevalence

- At the end of 2007 in Australia, 7417 males and 5189 females were alive who had been diagnosed with lung cancer at any time within the previous 5 years.

Burden of disease

- For lung cancer the vast majority (94% for men and 93% for women) of the burden of disease is due to premature death.
- In men, lung cancer is expected to be the leading cause of burden of disease due to cancer (20% of the burden due to cancer) in 2011, accounting for 57,100 disability-adjusted life years.
- In women, lung cancer is expected to be the second leading cause of the burden of disease due to cancer (17% of the burden due to cancer), only exceeded by breast cancer, in 2011, accounting for 42,300 disability-adjusted life years.

Risk factors

- Tobacco smoking is a major cause of lung cancer. Research has also demonstrated that passive smoking can cause lung cancer.
- Environmental factors, including occupational exposure to a range of industrial and chemical carcinogens, indoor and outdoor air pollution, may increase the risk of lung cancer.
- Other risk factors may include family history of lung cancer, and previous lung disease.
- While these are some of the common risk factors, Cancer Australia is currently undertaking a systematic review of the risk factors associated with lung cancer.

Source

- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare & Cancer Australia. Lung cancer in Australia: an overview. Cat. no. CAN 58. Canberra: AIHW 2011.

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ABN 21075951918

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