



World Cancer Congress Geneva, Switzerland 18—20 Oct 2022



What is cancer?

Cancer is a disease which occurs when changes in a group of normal cells within the body lead to an uncontrolled, abnormal growth forming a lump called a tumour; this is true of all cancers except leukaemia (cancer of the blood). If left untreated, tumours can grow and spread into the surrounding normal tissue, or to other parts of the body via the bloodstream and lymphatic systems, and can affect the digestive, nervous and circulatory systems or release hormones that may affect body function.

Global cancer facts

- Cancer is the **second-leading cause** of death worldwide.
- The International Agency for Research on Cancer estimates that one-in-five men and one-in-six women worldwide will develop cancer over the course of their lifetime, and that one-in-eight men and one-in-eleven women will die from their disease. This equates to **an estimated 19.3 million new cases and 10 million people dying from cancer in 2020**.
- By 2040, the number of new cancer cases worldwide are expected to rise to **30 million**.
- At least **one third** of common cancers are preventable by acting on modifiable risk factors (e.g. reducing alcohol consumption, avoiding tobacco use, adopting a healthier diet and engaging in physical exercise).
- As survival rates for cancer increase significantly the earlier the cancer is detected and treatment begins, it is further estimated that up to **3.7 million lives could be saved each year** by implementing resource appropriate strategies for prevention, early detection, and timely treatment, including routine screening for and timely treatment of cancers such as breast, cervical, colorectal and prostate. (*See WHO cancer prevent facts*).
- Genetic mutations play a role in **5-10% of cancers**.
- Approximately **70% of all cancer deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries** (LMICs). These countries are least well placed to deliver the services needed by people living with cancer or manage the social or economic consequences of this burden.
- The total economic cost of cancer has been estimated at **USD 1.16 trillion**. This translates into a loss of productivity and household income, reduction of quality of life, disability, and ultimately premature death.



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