Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cancer statistics

The following material has been sourced from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. The following information incorporates the most up-to-date data available to describe the incidence, mortality, survival and prevalence of cancer in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia. The ICD-10 cancer codes associated with ‘all cancers combined’ and individual cancer sites can be found on their respective pages.

Number of new cancer cases diagnosed in Indigenous Australians, 2009-2013

6,397 =

3,097 males +

3,300 females

Number of deaths from cancer in Indigenous Australians, 2011-2015

2,754 =

1,433 males +

1,321 females

Chance of surviving at least 5 years (2007-2014)

50%
Indigenous Australians living with cancer at the end of 2013 (diagnosed in the 5 year period 2008 to 2013)

3,626

Key findings

The age-standardised incidence rate and mortality rate for all cancers combined is higher for Indigenous Australians than non-Indigenous Australians. The higher incidence rate may be related to high prevalence of cancer-related modifiable risk factors such as smoking, alcohol consumption and Hepatitis B infection, along with lower participation in cancer screening in Indigenous Australians. The higher mortality rate may be partly due to the fact that Indigenous Australians generally have poorer access to health-care services and are more likely to have cancers that are diagnosed at a later stage than non-Indigenous Australians.

New cases of cancer in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia

In 2009–2013, there were 6,397 new cases of cancer diagnosed in Indigenous Australians (3,097 cases in males and 3,300 cases in females) in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. During the same period, 466,956 new cases of cancer were diagnosed in non-Indigenous Australians in the same five jurisdictions.

In 2009–2013, the age-standardised incidence rate for Indigenous Australians was 501 cases per 100,000 persons (561 for males and 460 for females). The age-standardised incidence rate for non-Indigenous Australians during the same period was 438 cases per 100,000 persons (519 for males and 371 for females).

In 2009–2013, the age-specific incidence rate for all cancers combined increased with age for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The age-specific incidence rate for all cancers combined was similar or higher in Indigenous Australians than non-Indigenous Australians for all age groups.
During 2009–2013, lung cancer was the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Indigenous Australians, followed by breast cancer (in females), colorectal cancer and prostate cancer. For non-Indigenous Australians, prostate cancer was the most commonly diagnosed cancer, followed by breast cancer (in females), colorectal cancer and lung cancer. Cancer type rankings varied for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
Deaths from cancer in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia

In 2011–2015, 2,754 Indigenous Australians died from cancer (1,433 males and 1,321 females) in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. During the same period, there were 154,186 deaths from cancer among non-Indigenous Australians (87,723 males and 66,463 females).

In 2011–2015, the age-standardised mortality rate among Indigenous Australians was 231 deaths per 100,000 persons (269 for males and 203 for females). During the same period, the age-standardised mortality rate was 166 deaths per 100,000 persons for non-Indigenous Australians (209 for males and 132 for females).

In 2011–2015, the age-specific mortality rate for all cancers combined increased with age for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The age-specific mortality rate was similar or higher in Indigenous Australians than non-Indigenous Australians for all age groups.
Survival from cancer in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia

In 2007–2014, Indigenous Australians diagnosed with cancer had a 50% chance, on average, of surviving five years compared to their counterparts in the Indigenous population. For non-Indigenous Australians, the five-year relative survival rate for all cancers combined was 65%.

Survivorship population for cancer in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia

At the end of 2013, there were 1,058 Indigenous Australians (487 males and 571 females) living who had been diagnosed with cancer that year. During the same period, there were 79,662 non-Indigenous Australians (42,927 males and 36,735 females) living in the same selected states who had been diagnosed with cancers that year.

At the end of 2013, there were 3,626 Indigenous Australians (1,616 males and 2,010 females) living...
who had been diagnosed with cancer in the previous five years. During the same period, 313,894 non-Indigenous Australians (170,747 males and 143,147 females) were living in the same selected states who had been diagnosed with cancer in the previous five years.

References
