Report Finds Continued Progress In Reducing Cancer Mortality

The American Cancer Society's annual cancer statistics report shows that between 2004 and 2008, overall cancer incidence rates declined by 0.6 percent annually in men and were stable in women, while cancer death rates decreased by 1.8 percent annually in men and by 1.6 percent in women. The report, *Cancer Statistics 2012*, says over the past 10 years of available data (1999-2008), cancer death rates have declined in men and women of every racial/ethnic group with the exception of American Indians/Alaska Natives, among whom rates have remained stable. The reduction in overall cancer death rates since 1990 in men and 1991 in women translates to the avoidance of more than a million total deaths from cancer during that time period.

Each year, the American Cancer Society estimates the numbers of new cancer cases and deaths expected in the United States in the current year and compiles the most recent data on cancer incidence, mortality, and survival based on incidence data from the National Cancer Institute and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as reported by the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries, and mortality data from the National Center for Health Statistics. *Cancer Facts & Figures 2012*, the report's accompanying consumer publication, includes a Special Section each year, which in 2012 focuses on cancers with increasing incidence rates. Other highlights include:

- The most rapid declines in death rates occurred among African American and Hispanic men (2.4 and 2.3 percent per year, respectively).
- Death rates continue to decline for all four major cancer sites (lung, colorectum, breast, and prostate), with lung cancer accounting for almost 40 percent of the total decline in men and breast cancer accounting for 34 percent of the total decline in women.
- Cancer incidence and death rates vary considerably among racial and ethnic groups. For all cancer sites combined, African American men have a 15 percent higher incidence rate and a 33 percent higher death rate than white men, whereas African American women have a six percent lower incidence rate but a 16 percent higher death rate than white women.

The Special Section, which is also published as a standalone article in CA, finds that despite declines in incidence rates for the most common cancers, the incidence of several cancers has increased in the past decade, including cancers of the pancreas, liver, thyroid and kidney, as well as melanoma of the skin, esophageal adenocarcinoma and certain subsites of oropharyngeal cancer associated with human papillomavirus infection.

Increases in incidence rates by age were steepest for liver and HPV-related oropharyngeal cancers among those ages 55 to 64 years and for melanoma in those aged 65 years and older. Notably, for HPV-related oropharyngeal cancer in men and thyroid cancer in women, incidence rates were higher in those ages 55 to 64 years than in those aged 65 years and older. Rates increased for both local and advanced stage diseases for most cancer sites.

The reasons for these increasing trends are not entirely known. Part of the increase (for esophageal adenocarcinoma and cancers of the pancreas, liver, and kidney) may be linked to the increasing prevalence of obesity as well as increases in early detection practices for some cancers. The special section says these rising trends will exacerbate the growing cancer burden associated with population expansion and aging and that additional research is needed to determine their underlying cause.

Cancer Statistics 2012 can be viewed at cacancerjournal.com [1], while *Cancer Facts & Figures 2012* is available at cancer.org/statistics [2].

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