

Cancer Facts & Stats - 1st 2020 – by Talía Malagón

Title: Canadian Cancer Statistics 2019 - progress and challenges

Every year the Canadian Cancer Society publishes Canadian cancer statistics.(1) Trends in cancer incidence, mortality, and survival are vital to help us understand how we are doing in terms of decreasing the health burden of cancer. The following are some key results from the 2019 statistics. While lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death, there has been a substantial decline in the lung cancer mortality over the past 30 years in men, and more recently in women as well. These achievements have been the result of decades of tobacco control efforts. While mortality rates for most cancers are on the decline, incidence and mortality from liver and melanoma are increasing. This suggests there is still a ways to go in terms of preventing the causes of these cancers, including lowering our alcohol consumption, preventing and treating chronic hepatitis B and C infections, and increasing our sun safety behaviours. Most encouragingly, survival from cancer is continuously increasing over time; while in the early 1990s the probability a cancer case would survive their cancer over 5 years was 55%, that probability is now closer to 63%. These improvements are the fruit of continued research into improving cancer early detection and treatment. While there is no doubt a lot of progress has been made in the fight against cancer, because the Canadian population is continuing to grow and age there are still likely to be growing numbers of people living with cancer each year. The biggest challenge for the future will likely be an increasing demand on the healthcare system for cancer services, including diagnostics, treatment, and palliative care.

References

1. Canadian Cancer Society's Advisory Committee on Cancer Statistics. Canadian Cancer Statistics 2019. Toronto (ON): Canadian Cancer Society; 2019.