

IARC launches the definitive cancer statistics resource GLOBOCAN 2008

A landmark resolution of the UN General Assembly¹ adopted in New York earlier this month called for action to address the increasing trends in premature deaths from non-communicable diseases worldwide, with a particular focus on developing countries. The International Agency for Research on Cancer² today announces GLOBOCAN 2008, which provides the most accurate assessment of the global cancer burden and shows that in 2008 a majority of the 12.7 million new cases of cancer and the 7.6 million cancer deaths worldwide occurred in developing countries.

An updated cancer statistics resource

The International Agency for Research on Cancer today 1 June 2010 announces the release of GLOBOCAN 2008,³ an online resource for cancer researchers, policy-makers and the media alike, which provides worldwide estimates⁴ of the numbers of new cases of, and deaths from, cancer for 2008.⁵ Information is provided for the overall burden of cancer and for 27 specific cancer types for almost all countries or territories of the world. According to GLOBOCAN, an estimated 12.7 million new cancer cases and 7.6 million cancer deaths occurred in 2008. Dr Christopher Wild, IARC Director, stated: "These figures represent the most accurate assessment of the global cancer burden available at present and can be used in the setting of priorities for cancer control in different regions of the world; they form a vital foundation to future responses to the UN resolution on non-communicable diseases."

Less-developed regions face a heavier cancer burden

GLOBOCAN 2008 demonstrates that a higher proportion of the cancer burden occurs in less developed regions of the world, both in terms of cancer incidence (56% of new cancer cases in 2008 occur within developing regions) and cancer mortality (63% of cancer deaths). The most commonly diagnosed cancers worldwide are lung (1.61 million, 12.7% of the total), breast (1.38 million, 10.9%) and colorectal cancers (1.23 million, 9.7%). The most common causes of cancer death are lung (1.38 million, 18.2% of the total), stomach (0.74 million, 9.7%) and liver cancers (0.69 million, 9.2%). Cancer is neither rare anywhere in the world, nor confined to high-resource countries. "Striking differences in the patterns of cancer from region to region are observed," Dr Wild added. "Cervix and liver cancers are much more common in developing regions of the world, whereas prostate and colorectal cancers are more common in developed regions."

Interactive and user-friendly tool: fact sheets and trend calculation online

The online resource is easy to use and has facilities to produce maps and other graphics. In addition, a series of fact sheets describe the overall cancer burden within specific areas or countries, as well as the major global patterns for eight common cancers.

¹ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A%2F64%2FL.52&Submit=Search&Lang=E

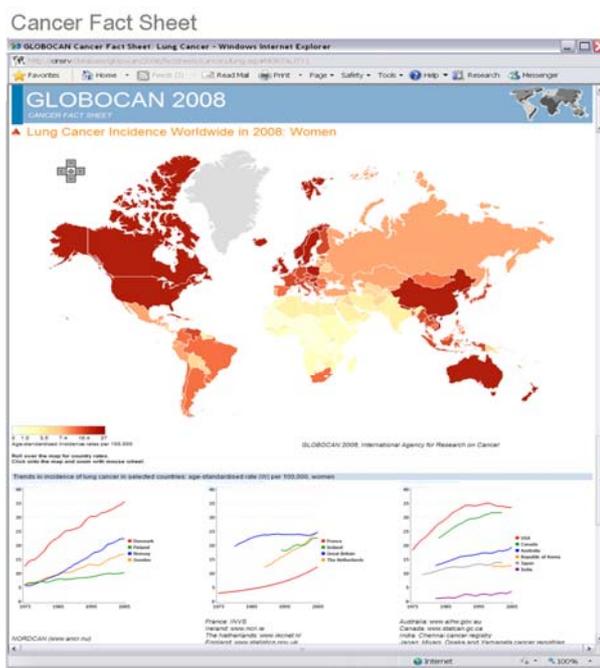
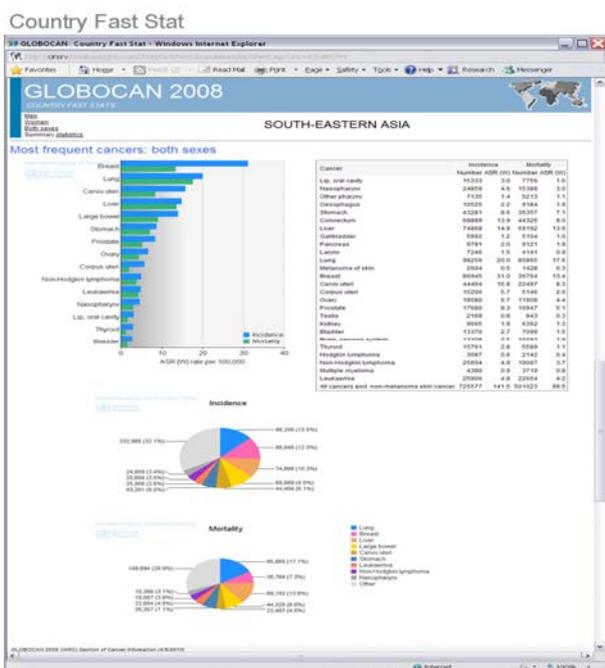
² IARC is the specialized cancer agency of the World Health Organization. IARC's mission is to coordinate and conduct research on the causes of human cancer, the mechanisms of carcinogenesis, and to develop scientific strategies for cancer prevention and control.

³ <http://globocan.iarc.fr/>

⁴ These estimates are based on the most recent data available at IARC and on information publicly available on the world-wide web, but more recent figures may be available directly from local sources.

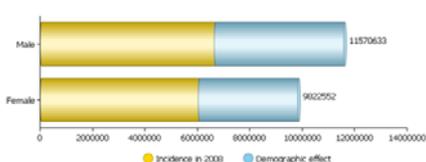
⁵ GLOBOCAN 2008 builds up the global profile of cancer using a number of methods that are dependent on the availability and the accuracy of the data. National sources are used where possible, with local data and statistical modeling used in their absence.

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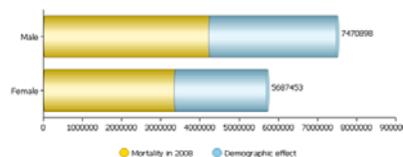


Further, GLOBOCAN 2008 provides the user with facilities to predict the future cancer incidence and mortality burden over the next 20 years according to the foreseen changes in population aging and population growth. Thus, assuming underlying rates of cancer will remain unaltered over the next two decades, GLOBOCAN 2008 projects that by 2030, there will be almost 21.4 million new cases diagnosed annually and that there will be over 13.2 million deaths from cancer.

Estimated numbers of new cancer cases in 2030 worldwide, based on demographic changes



Estimated numbers of cancer deaths in 2030 worldwide, based on demographic changes



IARC, the world reference for cancer data

The Agency is involved in both epidemiological and laboratory research and disseminates scientific information through publications, meetings, courses, and fellowships. The monitoring of cancer occurrence is fundamental to developing research into the etiology of the disease as well as to planning and evaluating public health interventions. Geographic comparisons, temporal trends and ecological studies provide clues to the etiology of cancer. GLOBOCAN 2008 is one of several key reference tools produced by IARC for cancer epidemiologists worldwide available at CancerMondial.org.

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