

Health Reports: Progress in net cancer survival in Canada over 20 years

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Just under half of all Canadians are expected to be diagnosed with cancer during their lifetime, while approximately one-quarter of Canadians are expected to die from this disease. Cancer survival estimates, which provide a measure of disease severity and prognosis, are critical to the monitoring of progress in cancer outcomes when examined over time.

A new study released today in *Health Reports* provides estimates of net survival—where the cancer of interest is hypothetically the only possible cause of death—for 30 of the most commonly diagnosed cancers. These estimates are also compared over 20 years. The study makes use of a new analytical file, which links data from the Canadian Cancer Registry with death information.

From 2012 to 2014, five-year net survival ranged from 98% for thyroid cancer to 7% for mesothelioma. Five-year net survival was particularly high for cancers of the testis (97%) and prostate (93%), but especially low for cancers of the pancreas (8%), esophagus (15%), lung and bronchus (19%), liver (19%) and brain (21%), as well as for acute myeloid leukemia (21%).

Between 1992 to 1994 and 2012 to 2014, improvements in five-year age standardized net survival were greatest for chronic myeloid leukemia (+23.9 percentage points). Increases exceeding 15.0 percentage points were also observed for non-Hodgkin lymphoma (+19.5), cancer of the small intestine (+17.4) and multiple myeloma (+16.9). In contrast, little to no improvement was observed for cancers of the anus, larynx, soft tissue or uterus, or for mesothelioma.

In addition to the *Health Reports* article, tables providing detailed estimates of five-year net survival for over 50 different types of cancer are also being released today.

The estimates in the study and tables will be updated as new information becomes available.

Note to readers

Data are from the Canadian Cancer Registry, with mortality follow-up to the end of 2014 through record linkage to the Canadian Vital Statistics Death Database and tax files. Incident cases from the province of Quebec were excluded because cancer incidence data from this province have not been submitted to the Canadian Cancer Registry since the 2010 data year.

Net survival may be thought of as the survival probability that would be observed in the hypothetical situation where the cancer of interest is the only possible cause of death. It is the preferred method for comparing cancer survival in population-based cancer studies because it adjusts for the fact that different populations may have different levels of background risk of death.

Net survival estimates for the 2012 to 2014 period were predicted using the period method. Comparisons of net survival over time were based on age-standardized estimates. The estimates of cancer survival are population-based and should be interpreted as "average" indicators of net survival rather than reflecting any individual's prognosis.



Available tables: [13-10-0158-01](#) to [13-10-0161-01](#) .

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3207](#) and [3233](#).

"Progress in net cancer survival in Canada over 20 years" is now available in the September 2018 online issue of *Health Reports*, Vol. 29, no. 9 ([82-003-X](#)).

Estimates of five-year net survival for over 50 different types of cancer for each three-year period between 1992 to 1994 and 2007 to 2009 are also now available.

This issue of *Health Reports* also contains the article "[Formal home care use in Canada.](#)"

To enquire about "Progress in net cancer survival in Canada over 20 years," contact Larry Ellison (larry.ellison@canada.ca), Health Statistics Division.

To enquire about "Using data linkage to report surgical treatment of breast cancer in Canada," contact Heather Gilmour (heather.gilmour@canada.ca), Health Analysis Division.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca).

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