

Stomach cancer rate set to fall further 25 percent over next decade

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New cases of stomach cancer are set to plummet a further 25 per cent in the West over the next decade, indicates research published ahead of print in the journal Gut.

Stomach cancer is the fourth most common cancer, and the second leading cause of cancer related death, in the world.

The findings are based on the long term monitoring of the three types of cell changes indicative of subsequent stomach cancer.

The authors tracked all new cases of atrophic gastritis, intestinal metaplasia, and dysplasia recorded in the Dutch national registry of diseased tissue samples.

The monitoring period covered the years 1991 to 2005 and included almost 98,000 patients who had a routine tissue sample (biopsy) taken.

Most of the cases were intestinal metaplasia, which was diagnosed in almost 66,000 patients during the monitoring period.

The figures showed that the rate of new cases fell steadily by between 2.4 and 2.9% a year in women and men, respectively.

Dysplasia, which was diagnosed in just over 8500 patients, and atrophic gastritis, which was diagnosed in just over 23,000, both fell by more than 8% a year.

The fall in new cases of intestinal metaplasia and atrophic gastritis was even sharper after 1996, the figures showed.

On the basis of these trends, the authors calculate that new cases of gastric cancer will fall by “at least 24%” over the next decade in the West, without the need for treatment.

The authors say that the fall in the number of cases of gastric inflammation caused by *Helicobacter pylori* infection largely explains the figures.

Source: BMJ-British Medical Journal

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