

# Latest cancer research unveiled

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Two leading experts from the Division of Cancer Studies at King's presented their latest research into cancer survival this week at the National Cancer Intelligence Network conference in London.

The first study, led by Professor Henrik Moller, showed that up to half the number of men with prostate cancer who die do so as a direct result of the disease, rather than from other causes.

The researchers looked at 50,066 men with prostate cancer in the Thames Cancer Registry between 1997 and 2007. Of this group, 20,181 died during the 10 years, and of these deaths, 49 per cent were recorded as being due to the cancer itself. According to the study 12 per cent of deaths were caused by other cancers, 17 per cent from heart disease, eight per cent were from pneumonia and 13 per cent were due to other causes.

Prostate cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in UK men, after lung cancer. Every year around 37,000 men are diagnosed and over 10,100 men die from the disease.

Professor Henrik Moller, study author from King's College London and head of analysis and research at the NCIN, said: 'Our data show that a high proportion of men with prostate cancer die from it. Our findings challenge the commonly held view that most men with prostate cancer will die with the disease rather than from it.'

Survival of patients with the most common forms of cancer

The second study, presented by Dr Margreet Luchtenborg, revealed that more than 2,600 deaths in England from some of the most common types of cancer could be avoided each year if all cancer patients had the same chance of survival as the most affluent section of society.

The study found that the most well-off patients enjoyed a higher survival rate than the poorest patients.

Over 2,600 deaths from 14 of the most common forms of cancer, such as lung, breast and prostate, could be avoided each year in England in the five years after diagnosis if all patients had the same chance of survival regardless of their economic background.

The difference in survival between the richest patients and the poorest was the widest in the month after diagnosis.

Researchers suggested that more cancer patients from deprived backgrounds were diagnosed when the disease was at a late stage and often harder to treat – leading to the differences in survival.

This variation in survival could be due to many reasons - poorer people may be delaying seeing their doctor about worrying symptoms or they may be less likely to go for screening.

Not surprisingly, the greatest numbers of avoidable deaths were from breast, lung, bowel and prostate cancers - the four most common cancers in the UK.

The results showed that the number of deaths each year for breast cancer could be reduced by around 490, by 330 for lung cancer, around 690 for bowel cancer and around 330 for prostate cancer.

Margreet Luchtenborg, lead author of the study, said: ‘This study shows that deprivation leads to inequality in survival for the most common

cancers in England, especially in the month immediately after diagnosis.

‘This could be because poorer patients are more likely to be diagnosed with a late stage cancer.’

The study looked at more than 1.5 million cancer patients in England diagnosed with 14 of the most common [cancer](#) types between 1999 and 2007 and analysed survival from 2004 to 2007 for five different groups based on measures of wealth.

Provided by King's College London

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