

Cancer kills less in US, but prevention lacking

January 7 2013, by Jean-Louis Santini

Fewer people are dying from cancer in the United States, but a government report published Monday warned that a lack of preventative measures could stem a steady decline in mortality rates.

[Mortality rates](#) have been falling since the early 1990s. The study found that from 2000 to 2009, cancer death rates decreased by 1.8 percent per year among men and by 1.4 percent per year among women.

Death rates among children up to 14 years of age also continued to decrease by 1.8 percent per year, according to the Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer.

Overall cancer incidence rates fell 0.6 percent per year among men from 2000 to 2009, while rates were stable among women and rose by 0.6 percent per year among children under the age of 15.

"While this report shows that we are making progress in the fight against cancer on some fronts, we still have much work to do, particularly when it comes to preventing cancer," said Thomas Frieden, director of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

"For example, vaccinating against (the sexually transmitted disease) HPV can prevent [cervical cancer](#), but, tragically, far too many girls are growing into adulthood vulnerable to cervical cancer because they are not vaccinated."

The study found that fewer than half of US girls aged 13 to 17 had received at least one dose of the vaccine and only 32 percent had received all three recommended doses in 2010.

This falls well short of the government's targets and of [vaccination rates](#) of 50 to 85 percent in neighboring Canada and of more than 70 percent in the United Kingdom and Australia.

It comes as HPV-associated [cancer rates](#) are on the rise.

"The continuing drop in [cancer mortality](#) over the past two decades is reason to cheer," said John Seffrin, [chief executive officer](#) of the American Cancer Society, which co-authored the study.

"The challenge we now face is how to continue those gains in the face of new obstacles, like obesity and [HPV infections](#).

"We must face these hurdles head on, without distraction, and without delay, by expanding access to proven strategies to prevent and control cancer."

The report also found that death rates among men decreased for 10 of the 17 most common cancers (lung, prostate, colon and rectum, leukemia, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, kidney, stomach, myeloma, oral cavity and pharynx and larynx) and increased for melanoma of the skin and cancers of the pancreas and liver.

Death rates for women decreased for 15 of the 18 most common cancers (lung, breast, colon and rectum, ovary, leukemia, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, brain and other nervous system, myeloma, kidney, stomach, cervix, bladder, esophagus, oral cavity and pharynx, and gallbladder) and increased for cancers of the pancreas, liver and uterus.

Meanwhile, incidence rates for women decreased for seven of the 18 most common cancers (lung, colon and rectum, bladder, cervix, oral cavity and pharynx, ovary and stomach), and increased for seven others (thyroid, melanoma of the skin, kidney, pancreas, leukemia, liver and uterus).

Incidence rates were stable for the other top 17 cancers, including breast cancer in women and non-Hodgkin lymphoma in men and women.

Cancer kills more than 1,500 people a day in the United States. That's 301,820 men and 275,370 women in 2012, according to the latest estimates by the [American Cancer Society](#).

About 1.6 million Americans are diagnosed with cancer every year.

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