

Number of cancer survivors expected to increase to 18 million by 2022

March 27 2013

The American Association for Cancer Research released its second Annual Report on Cancer Survivorship in the United States in advance of the AACR Annual Meeting 2013, which will be held in Washington, D.C., April 6-10.

The report, published in the AACR's journal *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*, shows that as of January 2012, there were approximately 13.7 million [cancer](#) survivors in the United States, a number that is expected to rise by 31 percent to 18 million by 2022.

"The increase in the number of survivors will be due primarily to an aging of the population. By 2020, we expect that two-thirds of [cancer survivors](#) are going to be age 65 or older," said Julia Rowland, Ph.D., director of the Office of [Cancer Survivorship](#) at the National Cancer Institute, a part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The current report was based on an analysis of the Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results Program and population projections from the U.S. Census Bureau, both government-funded databases.

In addition to providing estimates of future cancer survival trends, the report shows that survival is not uniform across cancer subtypes. Currently, women with breast cancer account for 22 percent of survivors, while men with prostate cancer make up 20 percent. People with lung cancer, the second most common cancer in terms of diagnosis, only represent 3 percent of survivors.

"For patients with prostate cancer, we have a nearly 100 percent five-year survival rate, and breast cancer has made tremendous strides as well, with five-year survival rising from 75 percent in 1975 to almost 89 percent in 2012," said Rowland. "However, we clearly need to have better diagnostic tools and better treatments for lung cancer."

According to Rowland, the increase in the cancer survivor population will present new challenges for the health care community. Patients diagnosed with cancer will likely have comorbid conditions that need to be managed, and Rowland estimates 16 percent will have had a previous malignancy.

"How to ensure that these patients lead not only long lives, but healthy and productive lives, will be a vital challenge to all of us," said Rowland.

Provided by American Association for Cancer Research

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