

Cancer no. 1 killer of Asian-Americans, Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders: study

January 14 2016



(HealthDay)—Cancer is the leading cause of death among Asian

Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, even though overall cancer incidence and death rates in these groups are lower than among white Americans, a new study finds.

There will be about 57,740 new cancer cases and nearly 17,000 cancer deaths among Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in 2016, the American Cancer Society report estimated.

The three leading causes of cancer death among Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander men are lung (27 percent), liver (14 percent) and colon/rectum (11 percent). Among women, they are lung (21 percent), breast (14 percent) and colon/rectum (11 percent), the findings showed.

Even though Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders have [cancer incidence](#) and [death rates](#) that are 30 percent to 40 percent lower for all cancers combined than whites, their rates of stomach and liver cancers are nearly double those of whites. And they also have higher rates of nasopharynx (upper throat behind the nose) cancers.

The researchers also found that Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are less likely than whites to be diagnosed with cancer before it has spread.

Within Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander subgroups, there are also wide variations in cancer incidence rates.

"The variations we see in cancer rates in [these groups] are related to risk factors, including lifestyle factors, use of screening and preventive services, and exposure to cancer-causing infections," study co-author Lindsey Torre said in a journal news release. Torre is an epidemiologist in the surveillance research group at the cancer society.

Between 2006 and 2010, incidence rates per 100,000 men ranged from about 217 among Asian Indians/Pakistanis to almost 527 among Samoans. The rate among white men was 554.

Among Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women, rates ranged from 212 among Asian Indians/Pakistanis to almost 443 among Samoans. The rate among white women was about 445, according to the report.

Among both men and women in this population, the highest rates after Samoans were among Native Hawaiians and Japanese, the study authors said.

"Cancer-control strategies among this population include improved use of vaccination and screening; interventions to increase physical activity and reduce excess body weight, tobacco use and alcohol consumption; and research to get a more detailed understanding of differences in the [cancer](#) burden and risk factors between subgroups," Torre concluded.

The study was published Jan. 14 in *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*.

More information: The U.S. National Cancer Institute has more about [cancer](#).

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Citation: Cancer no. 1 killer of Asian-Americans, Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders: study (2016, January 14) retrieved 1 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-01-cancer-killer-asian-americans-hawaiians-pacific.html>

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