

# **Annual UK cancer cases set to soar to half a million in less than 20 years**

October 12 2016

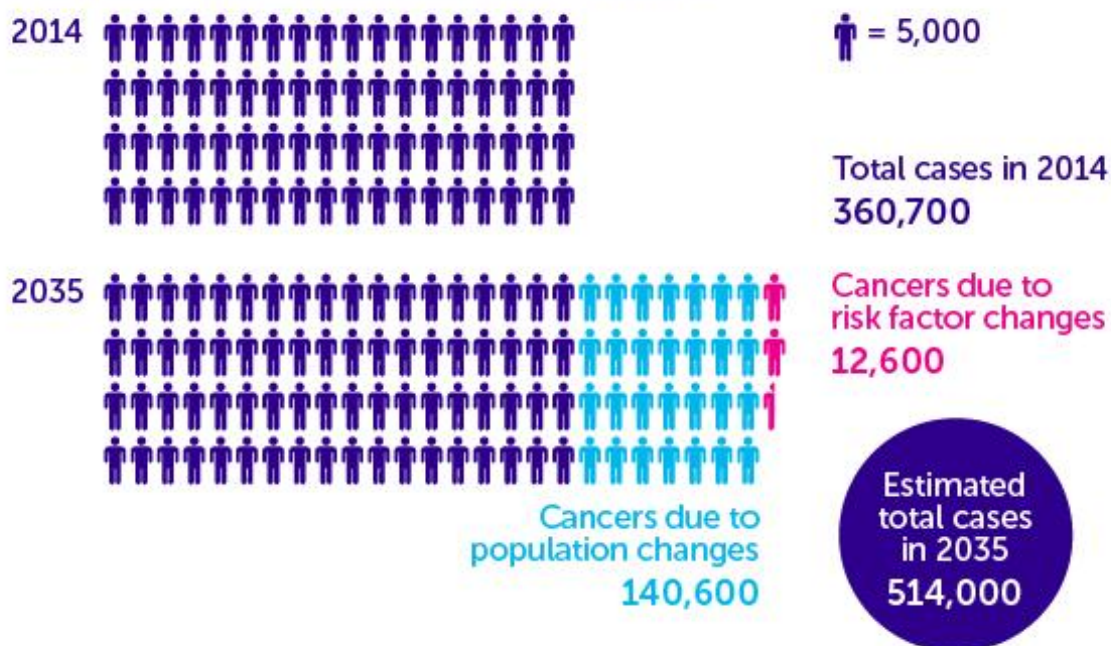
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# WHY ARE WE EXPECTING MORE PEOPLE TO BE DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER?

It's mostly because the population is growing and getting older, but risk factors that cause cancer are also playing a bigger part.



## PEOPLE IN THE UK DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER



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Five hundred thousand people will be diagnosed with cancer each year in the UK by 2035 if trends continue, according to a Cancer Research UK study published in the *British Journal of Cancer*. Credit: Cancer Research UK

FIVE hundred thousand people will be diagnosed with cancer each year in the UK by 2035 if trends continue, according to a Cancer Research UK study published in the *British Journal of Cancer* today.

Today, more than 352,000 people are diagnosed with cancer each year in the UK. The increase would mean 150,000 extra cases diagnosed annually in 20 years' time.

By 2035, it is predicted that nearly 244,000 cases of cancer will be diagnosed in women and more than 270,000 in men - up from around 173,000 and around 179,000 today.

Breast and prostate cancers are projected to be the most common cancers in women and men respectively in 2035.

This research highlights the urgent need to plan for the future of NHS cancer services which are already stretched to the limit as they struggle to cope with a growing and ageing population.

A radically upgraded prevention effort will therefore be critical in reducing the impact of the disease in the coming decades. While one in two people will develop cancer at some point in their lifetime, four in 10 cancers in the UK could be prevented by leading a healthy lifestyle including avoiding smoking, drinking less alcohol and keeping a healthy weight.

As the number of both men and women being diagnosed with cancer continues to rise we must also continue efforts to improve survival through better and earlier diagnosis and treatment.

Sharon Robinson, 60, who lives in London, had been a manager of a Cancer Research UK shop for 13 years when she was diagnosed with [womb cancer](#) in 2007. Sharon's cancer was diagnosed before it had

spread. She had surgery and radiotherapy before returning to work in 2008. She says she's alive today because of research:

"When I first had bleeding I thought it might be something to do with the menopause, but it seemed out of the ordinary to me so I went to my doctor. Being told I had cancer was scary, as I knew it meant having my womb removed followed by weeks of radiotherapy. But in the end it was all worth it because here I am today cancer-free. It's so important that when people notice unusual or persistent changes they go to their doctor, as spotting cancer early can save lives."

Dr Rebecca Smittenaar, lead author and Cancer Research UK's statistics manager said: "The number of people getting cancer in the UK will increase sharply in the next two decades. This is mostly the result of an ageing and growing population but, for women, lifestyle factors are playing an increasingly important role.

"And worryingly, recent research found that three quarters of the population don't know there's a link between obesity and cancer even though it's the second biggest preventable cause of the disease - currently linked to around 18,100 cases per year. If things carry on as they are, this is also set to rise."

Sir Harpal Kumar, Cancer Research UK's chief executive, said: "These numbers are shocking. We know four in 10 cancers in the UK could be prevented. Cutting smoking rates and tackling the rising obesity epidemic is key to avoiding more cancer cases. Quitting smoking and keeping a [healthy weight](#) isn't always easy. All of us - including the Government - can do more to help individuals and families make healthy choices. "

Professor Peter Johnson, Cancer Research UK's chief clinician, said: "There is no getting away from the fact that we're seeing ever increasing

numbers of people being diagnosed with cancer each year, and these numbers are quite alarming. It is vital that people know how to reduce their own risk of cancer as much as possible.

"But in addition the National Health Service needs to be planning now for the increased demands for the diagnosis, treatment and care for people with cancer. We have a serious shortage of specialists in important fields such as radiology, endoscopy and oncology. It's vital that the necessary staff and resources are available to ensure a high standard of care for patients across the UK."

**More information:** C R Smittenaar et al, Cancer incidence and mortality projections in the UK until 2035, *British Journal of Cancer* (2016). [DOI: 10.1038/bjc.2016.304](https://doi.org/10.1038/bjc.2016.304)

Provided by Cancer Research UK

Citation: Annual UK cancer cases set to soar to half a million in less than 20 years (2016, October 12) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-10-annual-uk-cancer-cases-soar.html>

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