

# Cancer to kill 10 mn in 2018 despite better prevention

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Cancer will kill nearly 10 million people this year, experts said Wednesday, warning the disease's global burden continues to rise in spite of better prevention and earlier diagnosis.

An estimated 18.1 million new [cancer](#) cases were predicted worldwide for 2018—with 9.6 million deaths, said a report of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

This is up from estimated 14.1 million new cancer cases and 8.2 million deaths reported in the agency's last assessment just six years ago.

The toll is rising as populations expand and grow older, and people in developing nations adopt unhealthy, high-risk lifestyles traditionally associated with richer economies.

An increased focus on prevention—encouraging people to get exercise, quit smoking, and eating a healthy diet—led to a drop in certain types of cancer in some population groups, the IARC said.

Yet the overall number of new cases is racing ahead of efforts to contain the disease.

"These new figures highlight that much remains to be done to address the alarming rise in the cancer burden globally and that prevention has a key role to play," said IARC director Christopher Wild.

One in five men and one in six women will develop cancer during their lifetime, the study said, and the World Health Organization expects the disease to be the leading cause of [death](#) in the 21st century.

There are dozens of types of cancer, and the agency found large differences between countries due to a host of socioeconomic factors.

## **Biggest killer**

Asia, unsurprisingly given its enormous population, accounted for nearly half of all new cases and more than half of cancer deaths worldwide in

2018.

Lung cancer remains the biggest killer overall, responsible for some 1.8 million deaths—nearly a quarter of the global toll.

For women, breast cancer caused 15 percent of cancer deaths, followed by lung cancer (13.8 percent) and colorectal cancer (9.5 percent).

The figures highlighted a worrying rise in lung cancer rates for women—it is now the leading cause of female cancer deaths in 28 countries including Denmark, the Netherlands, China, and New Zealand.

The data showed that cancer types traditionally associated with rich country lifestyles—more overweight people who are less inclined to exercise—were increasingly common in developing nations.

"One of the things that happens with transitions towards high levels of socio-economic development is the environment changes," Freddie Bray, IARC's head of cancer surveillance, told AFP.

"There is more physical inactivity and that happens to be a particularly high risk factor for colon cancer, for example."

## **Momentum lacking**

Bray said models using current cancer statistics and predicted trends forecast as many as 29 million new cases a year by 2040.

"The extent to which this is becoming a major public health problem and the diversity of cancers that we see in different regions is also a striking point," Bray said.

Anti-cancer measures could take the form of stricter tobacco controls to

limit [lung cancer](#), or initiatives to encourage physical activity to reduce the risk of [colon cancer](#).

But the study warned that global efforts to rein in one of mankind's biggest killers still "lacked momentum".

"Either from a social or an economic point of view the numbers are increasing," said Bray.

This means "there's a need to invest in prevention and public health programmes, and develop health services' capacity, particularly in low-medium income countries."

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