

Cancer statistics

Cancer continues to be the leading cause of death in New Zealand affecting individuals, families, friends and communities. Every day around 51 people are diagnosed with cancer in New Zealand and there are 22 cancer deaths.

Cancer is the leading cause of death in New Zealand accounting for 29.4% of all deaths. According to the latest Ministry of Health statistics, in 2005 there were 18,610 new cancer diagnoses and 7,970 cancer deaths in New Zealand.

The Cancer Society Auckland Division serves more than one third of New Zealand's population and this is reflected in the incidence of cancer in our region. In 2005 there were 4,990 new diagnoses and 2,029 deaths in Auckland, and 719 new diagnoses and 347 deaths in Northland.

What is cancer?

'Cancer' is a generic term used to describe a group of over a hundred diseases that occur when cells reproduce abnormally.

These cancer cells continue to divide and grow to produce tumours. Cancer cells can also invade adjacent structures and spread via the lymph or blood to distant organs. Some of the biological mechanisms that change a normal cell into a cancer cell are known; others are not.

Cancer differs from most other diseases in that it can develop at any stage in life, although it is predominantly a disease of old age. No two cancers behave exactly alike. Some may follow an aggressive course, with the cancer growing rapidly; other types grow slowly or may remain dormant for years. Very high cure rates can be achieved for some types of cancers, but for others the cure rates are disappointingly low and await improved methods of detection and treatment.

The wide range of cancer treatments and associated services reflects the biological diversity of cancer. It is estimated that environment or lifestyle can cause about 80% of cancers and these cancers are therefore potentially preventable. The risk factors for some cancers have been clearly identified, such as the link between tobacco and lung cancer, but for others further research is needed.

BY CANCER

Most common cancers

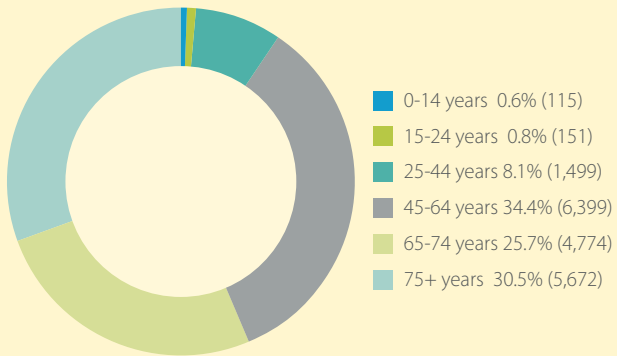
1. Colorectal 14.6% (2716 cases)
2. Breast 13.3% (2479 cases)
3. Prostate 13.3% (2471 cases)
4. Melanoma 10.8% (2017 cases)
5. Lung 8.9% (1659 cases)

Leading causes of cancer deaths

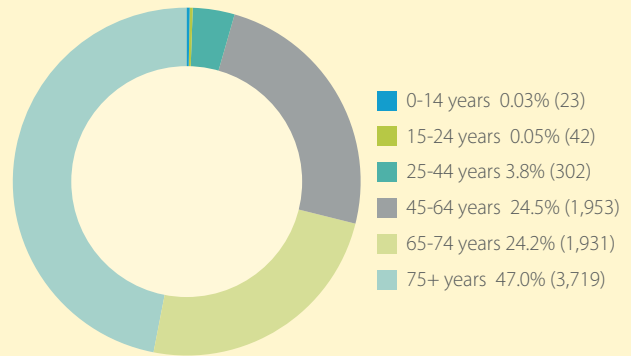
1. Lung 18.2% (1451 cases)
 2. Colorectal 15.3% (1222 cases)
 3. Breast 8.2% (652 cases)
 4. Prostate 7.1% (564 cases)
 5. Pancreas 4.1% (353 cases)
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BY AGE

Cancer diagnosis by age



Cancer deaths by age



BY GENDER

Females

8,963 new diagnoses and 3,786 deaths

Most common cancer diagnoses for females:

1. Breast 27.4% (2,458 cases)
2. Colorectal 15.5% (1,385 cases)
3. Melanoma 9.8% (910 cases)

Leading cause of cancer deaths for females:

1. Breast 17.1% (647 cases)
2. Colorectal 16.2% (614 cases)
3. Lung 15.5% (587 cases)

Males

9,647 new diagnoses and 4,184 deaths

Most common cancer diagnoses for males:

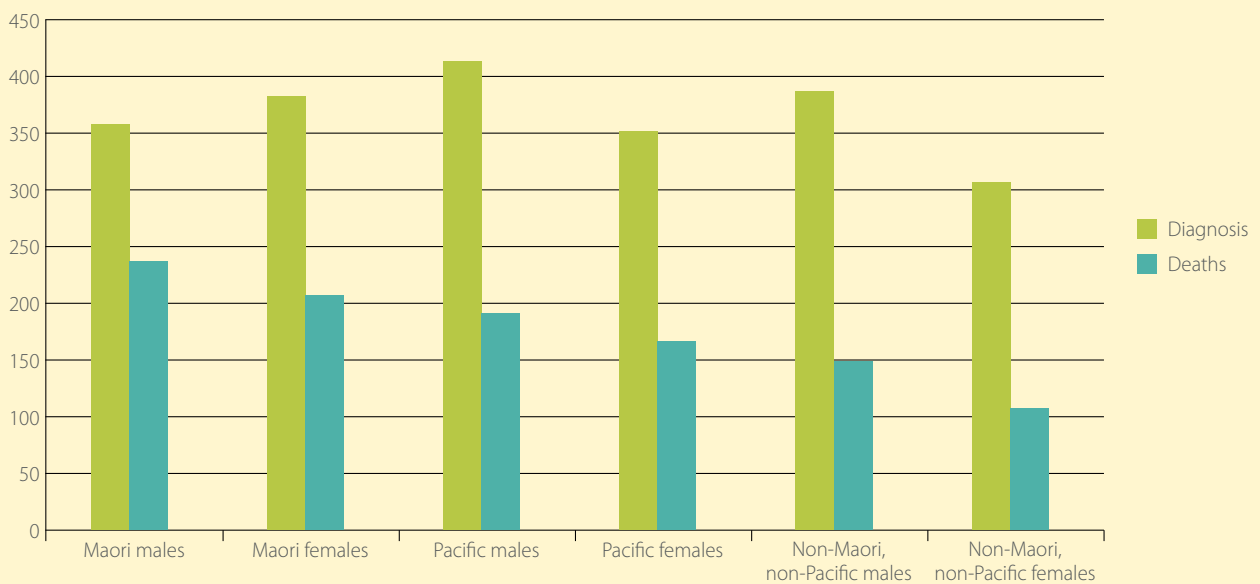
1. Prostate 25.6% (2,471 cases)
2. Colorectal 13.8% (1,331 cases)
3. Melanoma 11.5% (1,107 cases)

Leading cause of cancer deaths for males:

1. Lung 20.7% (864 cases)
2. Colorectal 14.5% (608 cases)
3. Prostate 13.5% (564 cases)

BY ETHNICITY

Age-standardised cancer diagnoses and death rates by ethnicity (per 100,000)



For further information and statistics visit www.nzhis.govt.nz

Source: Ministry of Health. 2008. Cancer: New Registrations and Deaths 2005. Wellington: Ministry of Health.