Cancer Survivors: A Growing Population

New report by the American Cancer Society projects 20 million cancer survivors in the U.S. by 2026

ATLANTA – June 2, 2016 –There were more than 15.5 million Americans with a history of cancer as of January 1, 2016, a number that is projected to reach more than 20 million by 2026. That's according to Cancer Treatment and Survivorship Statistics, 2016, published in *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society, and its companion publication for consumers, *Cancer Treatment & Survivorship Facts & Figures, 2016-2017*. The report was released ahead of National Cancer Survivors Day, Sunday June 5, 2016.

Although overall cancer incidence rates are declining in men and stable in women, the number of cancer survivors continues to increase in the United States because of a growing and aging population, as well as increases in cancer survival because of advances in early detection and treatment.

The report is produced every two years in collaboration with the National Cancer Institute to estimate the numbers of current and future cancer survivors to help the public health community better serve this unique population, many of whom cope with long-term physical effects of treatment as well as psychological and socioeconomic sequelae.

The three most prevalent cancers in 2016 are prostate (3,306,760), colorectal (724,690), and melanoma (614,460) among men and breast (3,560,570), uterine corpus (757,190), and colorectal (727,350) among women. The distribution of prevalent cancers (the number of previously diagnosed cancers among people who are alive) differs from incident cancers (the number of newly diagnosed cancers). For example, lung cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in men, but ranks eighth in prevalence, largely because of poor survival.

One-third of survivors in the U.S. today were diagnosed less than five years ago and more than one-half (56%) were diagnosed within the past 10 years. Nearly half (47%) are age 70 years or older, although age distribution varies by cancer type. For example, the majority of prostate cancer survivors (64%) are age 70 years or older, compared to just one in three (37%) melanoma survivors. The report estimates that there are 65,190 cancer survivors aged 14 and under and 47,180 aged 15 to 19 years in the United States.

In the article, the term "cancer survivor" is used to describe a person who has a history of cancer, from the time of diagnosis through the remainder of his or her life. It includes patients currently undergoing treatment and those who may have become cancer-free. It is important to note that not all people with a history of cancer identify with the term "cancer survivor."

"People with a history of cancer have unique medical and psychosocial needs that require proactive assessment and management by primary care providers," write the authors. "Although there are a growing number of tools that can assist patients, caregivers, and clinicians in navigating the various phases of cancer survivorship, further evidence-based resources are needed to optimize care."

The report says identification of the best practices for delivering quality posttreatment cancer care is needed and points to ongoing efforts by the American College of Surgeons, the Alliance for Quality Psychosocial Cancer Care, and the American Cancer Society (ACS). The ACS has begun to produce guidelines to assist primary care and other clinicians in the provision of care for people with a history of cancer.

The American Cancer Society, the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the LIVESTRONG Foundation will host the 8th Biennial Cancer Survivorship Research Conference, "Innovation in a Rapidly Changing Landscape," at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C., June 16-18, 2016. The meeting will serve as a forum for researchers, clinicians, cancer survivors, advocates, program planners, policy-makers, and public health experts to learn about current and emerging cancer survivorship innovation in a rapidly changing landscape. For more information, visit: http://www.cancer.org/subsites/survivorship2016/

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