American Cancer Society Reports Latest Global Cancer Statistics; Cancer Cases Approach 21 Million Worldwide, With Burden Projected to Surge 67% by 2050

New data reveal stark geographic inequities and call for urgent global action on prevention, early detection, and equitable treatment access

ATLANTA, July 8, 2026 — New findings in a report led by the American Cancer Society (ACS) today reveal an urgent picture of a growing global cancer burden and underscore the life-saving potential of stronger prevention and equitable access to care. According to Global Cancer Statistics, 2026, nearly 21 million people were diagnosed with cancer and 9.8 million died from the disease globally in 2024. The estimates show about 1 in 5 people worldwide will develop cancer during their lifetime; 1 in 9 men and 1 in 13 women will die from the disease. The number of cancer cases is projected to reach 34 million by 2050, a 67% increase from 2024, solely based on population aging and growth.

This important report is authored by researchers at ACS and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the cancer agency of the World Health Organization (WHO). The study is published today in *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*, the flagship journal of ACS, and available on cancer.org.

"Cancer is one of the greatest public health challenges of the 21st century and a major barrier to increasing life expectancy worldwide. Understanding the magnitude and geographic distributions of the disease is essential to guide effective and equitable prevention and control efforts," said Dr. Hyuna Sung, senior principal scientist, cancer surveillance at the American Cancer Society and lead author of the report. "While the scale of the cancer burden and the stark geographic disparities are sobering, they also point to a tremendous opportunity. Nearly half of all cancer deaths are estimated to be avoidable through potentially modifiable risk factors and an additional substantial proportion of cancer deaths can be prevented through early detection and timely treatment."

The report provides updated global cancer statistics for 2024, based on GLOBOCAN estimates. GLOBOCAN is a database of cancer incidence and mortality for 34 cancer types of cancer and 186 countries worldwide, produced by IARC. The authors describe national cancer incidence and mortality by world region and the Human Development Index and predict the burden in 2050 based on demographic trends.

Key findings from the report include:

- Cancer incidence rates varied approximately 4- to 5-fold across regions, with the highest rates observed in Australia/New Zealand and the lowest in parts of Africa and South-Central Asia.
- Mortality rates varied by 2-fold with the highest rates observed in Eastern Europe among men and in Melanesia among women.
- Lung cancer leads globally in both new diagnoses and deaths, a burden driven largely by tobacco. There were nearly 2.6 million new cases (13% of all cancers) and 1.9 million deaths from the disease (19% of all cancer deaths) in 2024.
- Female breast cancer ranked second in incidence globally, with 2.4 million new cases and 694,000 deaths, and was the leading cancer among women for both incidence and mortality.
- Women in Western Africa are twice as likely to die from breast cancer as women in Australia/New Zealand, despite having only half the incidence rate, a reflection of inequitable access to diagnosis and treatment.
- Colorectal cancer was the third most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death globally, with more than 2.0 million new cases and 918,000 deaths.
- Liver cancer accounted for 843,000 new cases and 732,000 deaths, ranking 3rd in cancer mortality.
- Prostate cancer was the second most commonly diagnosed cancer among men and the fourth leading cause of cancer death, with 1.5 million new cases and 420,000 deaths. Mortality rates were disproportionately higher in the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa, where the disease is often the leading cause of cancer death in men.
- Stomach cancer caused about 980,000 new cases and 642,000 deaths, ranking 5th for both incidence and

mortality, with the highest rates found in Eastern Asia.
- Cervical cancer, largely preventable through HPV vaccination and screening, is the leading cause of cancer death in women in 26 countries, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa and also in parts of South and Central America.
- Pancreatic cancer caused nearly half a million deaths (491,000), ranking sixth in mortality, despite ranking only 11th in incidence.
- Thyroid cancer accounted for nearly one million new cases worldwide (959,000), ranking as the sixth most commonly diagnosed cancer globally.

"Every region faces different cancer challenges, so every country needs a unique plan to mitigate the growing burden of cancer. However, cancer prevention must be every country's top priority," said Dr. Ahmedin Jemal, senior vice president of surveillance & health equity science at the American Cancer Society and co-author of the study. "We must intensify efforts to help people quit tobacco use, avoid cancer-linked infections, abstain from alcohol, maintain a healthy weight, and get more daily exercise."

ACS researcher Rebecca Siegel, MPH, also contributed to the report.

Additional ACS Resources:

- The Cancer Atlas
- Global Cancer Support
- Global Health Care Provider Support
- Global Cancer Statistics 2024
- ACS CancerRisk360

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About the American Cancer Society
The American Cancer Society is a leading cancer-fighting organization with a vision to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. For more than 110 years, we have been improving the lives of people with cancer and their families as the only organization combating cancer through advocacy, research, and patient support. We are committed to ensuring everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. To learn more, visit cancer.org or call our 24/7 helpline at 1-800-227-2345. Connect with us on Facebook, X, and Instagram.

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