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What Is Cancer?

Cancer is not one disease, but a group of diseases. For example, lung cancer is a completely different disease than colorectal cancer. All cancers have one thing in common, they can grow and spread uncontrollably if not diagnosed at an early stage and properly treated.

Cancer is caused by many things, like smoking, poor diet, and/or family history. The greatest risk factor for any cancer is increasing age. The risk of getting cancer increases with age. The risk of developing cancer differs for men and women. In the United States, one out of two men and one out of three women will have cancer in his or her lifetime.

What Is Cancer Incidence?

Cancer *incidence* is a measure of how many *new cancer cases* occurred in a certain period of time. A cancer *incidence rate* tells how many cancers were diagnosed per 100,000 people in the population. (For example, a cancer incidence rate of 400 means that for every 100,000 people, 400 were diagnosed with cancer).

Incidence rates can be *age-adjusted*, meaning that the age structure of the population is taken into account when rates are calculated. Adjusting for age allows us to compare rates by removing differences in the age structure among different populations. Incidence rates shown below are age-adjusted to the 2000 US standard population.

What Is Cancer Mortality?

Cancer *mortality* is a measure of how many *cancer deaths* occurred in a certain period of time. A cancer *mortality rate* tells how many people died from cancer per 100,000 people in the population. (For example, a cancer mortality rate of 150 means that for every 100,000 people in the population, 150 died from cancer).

Cancer mortality rates can also be *age-adjusted*, taking into account the age structure of the population. Mortality rates shown below are age-adjusted to the 2000 US standard population.

Impact of Cancer: US, SC, and SC County

The American Cancer Society (ACS) estimates that **1,685,210** new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in the United States in **2016**. This translates to **4,617** new diagnoses each day. Furthermore, an estimated **595,690** people in the United States are expected to die from cancer in **2016**.

In South Carolina, ACS estimates **27,980** new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in **2016** or over **77** new cancer cases diagnosed each day, while an estimated **10,330** South Carolinians will die from cancer in **2016**. The four most common cancers in SC are cancers of the lung, breast (female), prostate, and colon/rectum. The four leading cancer causes of death in SC are lung, colon/rectum, breast (female), and pancreas.

Tables 1 through 4 below show the number of new cancer cases and deaths for Lee County, including age-adjusted rates for cancers in the county and for the state of SC. The last column in each table shows how the county ranks in comparison to the other 45 SC counties. A rank of 1 means that a county has the highest rate of any county, while a rank of 46 means that a county has the lowest rate of any SC county. *At this time, the most recent cancer statistics for South Carolina and the United States are for new cases diagnosed in 2013. Deaths occurring in 2013 are also used.*

Table 1 shows 5-year cancer **incidence** data for Lee County and SC for all cancers by sex and race, including Lee County's rank in SC compared to all other SC counties.

Table 1. Cancer Incidence by Sex and Race, 2009-2013, Lee County and South Carolina*

	SC		Lee County	
	5-year rate	5-year rate	new cases*	SC rank
all	460	469	106	18
male	531	584	58	6
female	410	390	48	31
white	458	467	47	19
black	464	463	59	27

*Counts are annual averages based on 5 years of data. 5-year rates are per 100,000 age-adjusted to the 2000 US standard population. Statistics do not include *in situ* cancers, except for bladder. Source: SC Central Cancer Registry. ~ Statistic could not be calculated (small counts).

Table 2 shows 5-year cancer **mortality** data for Lee County and SC for all cancers by sex and race, including Lee County’s rank in SC compared to all other SC counties.

Table 2. Cancer Mortality by Sex and Race, 2009-2013, Lee County and South Carolina*

	SC		Lee County	
	5-year rate	5-year rate	lives lost*	SC rank
all	179	247	55	1
male	227	346	33	1
female	146	173	22	7
white	171	291	29	1
black	207	203	25	29

*Counts are annual averages based on 5 years of data. 5-year rates are per 100,000 age-adjusted to the 2000 US standard population. Sources: SC Central Cancer Registry and SC Vital Records. ~ Statistic could not be calculated (small counts).

Table 3 shows 5-year cancer **incidence** data for Lee County and SC for selected cancers, including Lee County’s rank in SC compared to all other SC counties.

Table 3. Cancer Incidence for Selected Cancers, 2009-2013, Lee County and South Carolina*

cancer	SC		Lee County	
	5-year rate	5-year rate	new cases*	SC rank
breast (female)	126	114	14	32
prostate (male)	129	190	20	2
lung/bronchus	69	73	17	16
colon/rectum	39	46	11	16
pancreas	13	~	3	31

*Counts are annual averages based on 5 years of data. 5-year rates are per 100,000 age-adjusted to the 2000 US standard population. Statistics do not include *in situ* cancers, except for bladder. Source: SC Central Cancer Registry. ~ Statistic could not be calculated (small counts).

Table 4 shows 5-year cancer **mortality** data for Lee County and SC for selected cancers, including Lee County’s rank in SC compared to all other SC counties.

Table 4. Cancer Mortality for Selected Cancers, 2009-2013, Lee County and South Carolina*

cancer	SC		Lee County	
	5-year rate	5-year rate	lives lost*	SC rank
breast (female)	22	~	3	23
prostate (male)	24	47	4	4
lung/bronchus	52	63	14	6
colon/rectum	16	33	8	1
pancreas	11	16	3	3

*Counts are annual averages based on 5 years of data. 5-year rates are per 100,000 age-adjusted to the 2000 US standard population. Sources: SC Central Cancer Registry and SC Vital Records. ~ Statistic could not be calculated (small counts).

Table 5 shows the percentage of cancers diagnosed in early and late stages of disease in **Lee County** and SC. Cancers diagnosed in late stages lessen the potential for successful treatment and raise the risk of premature loss of life.

Table 5. All Cancers by Stage of Diagnosis, 2009-2013, Lee County and South Carolina*

	SC	Lee County
	Percent of all cancers	Percent of all cancers
Early Stage	45.8	40.0
Late Stage	44.2	44.5
Unknown Stage	10.0	15.4

*Percents (proportions) shown are (rounded) based on 5 years of data. Statistics do not include *in situ* cancers, except for bladder. Source: SC Central Cancer Registry.

Breast Cancer in Lee County

Among women, breast cancer was the number 1 most commonly diagnosed cancer and the number 3 leading cause of cancer death from 2009-2013. For this 5-year period, there was an annual average of 14 new female breast cancer cases diagnosed and 3 deaths from this disease.

Prostate Cancer in Lee County

Among men, prostate cancer was the number 1 most commonly diagnosed cancer and the number 2 leading cause of cancer death from 2009-2013. For this 5-year period, there was an annual average of 20 new prostate cancer cases diagnosed and 4 deaths from this disease.

Lung Cancer in Lee County

Lung Cancer was the number 2 most commonly diagnosed cancer and the number 1 leading cause of cancer death from 2009-2013. For this 5-year period, there was an annual average of 17 new lung cancer cases diagnosed and 14 deaths from this disease.

Colorectal Cancer in Lee County

Colorectal cancer was the number 4 most commonly diagnosed cancer and the number 2 leading cause of cancer death from 2009-2013. For this 5-year period, there was an annual average of 11 new colorectal cancer cases diagnosed and 8 deaths from this disease.

Pancreatic Cancer in Lee County

Pancreatic cancer was the number 11 most commonly diagnosed cancer and the number 4 leading cause of cancer death from 2009-2013. For this 5-year period, there was an annual

average of 3 new pancreatic cancer cases diagnosed and 3 deaths from this disease.

Screening

Men and women should speak with their doctor about the pros and cons of screening and to determine their level of risk.

The SC Best Chance Network (BCN) is a federally funded program that provides breast and cervical cancer screening, follow-up and diagnosis for low-income, uninsured women age 30 – 64, screening thousands of women each year. For more information see:

<http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/DiseasesandConditions/Cancer/FreeCancerScreenings/>

Notes: Data are subject to change as data sets are updated. Rates are per 100,000 and age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population. Statistics do not include *in situ* cancers, except for bladder. The following suppression rules may have been applied to the data in the text and tables above: counts of 1-4 are recorded as less than 5; counts of 5-9 are rounded to 10. Rates based on counts fewer than 16 are suppressed (~).

Resources

SC Central Cancer Registry (DHEC)

<http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/DiseasesandConditions/Cancer/CancerStatisticsReports/>

American Cancer Society

<http://www.cancer.org/research/cancerfactsstatistics/>

CDC National Program of Cancer Registries

United States Cancer Statistics

<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/uscs/>

Division of Cancer Prevention and Control (DHEC)

<http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/DiseasesandConditions/Cancer/>

Division of Tobacco Prevention and Control (DHEC)

<http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/TobaccoCessation/>

SC Cancer Alliance

<http://www.sccanceralliance.org/>

