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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 in South Carolina

The American Cancer Society (ACS) estimates that 1,806,590 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in the United States in 2020. This translates to 4,950 new diagnoses each day. Furthermore, an estimated 606,520 people in the United States are expected to die from cancer in 2020.

In South Carolina, ACS estimates 31,710 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in 2020 or over 87 new cancer cases diagnosed each day, while an estimated 10,780 South Carolinians will die from cancer in 2020. 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 South Carolina, including age-adjusted rates for cancers in South Carolina and the United States. The last column in each table shows how SC ranks in comparison to the other 50 states and Washington DC. A rank of 1 means that a state has the highest rate of any state, while a rank of 51 means that a state has the lowest rate of any state. *At this time, the most recent cancer statistics for South Carolina and the United States are for cases diagnosed in 2017. Deaths occurring in 2017 are also used.*

Table 1 shows that there were a total of 27,766 new cancer cases in South Carolina during 2017. For all cancers combined, SC ranks 36th in the nation for

cancer incidence compared to all other states and Washington DC. Rates and rankings by sex and race are also provided.

Table 1. Cancer Incidence by Sex and Race, 2017 South Carolina and the United States *

	US		SC	US rank
	rate	rate	new cases	
all	430.7	434.4	27,766	36
male	466.1	482.6	14,373	29
female	407.1	399.3	13,389	39
white	431.7	438.0	20,984	34
black	420.5	420.0	6,283	27

*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. Sources: SC Central Cancer Registry, SC Vital Records, CDC NPCR United States Cancer Statistics.

Table 2 shows that there were a total of 10,346 cancer **deaths** in South Carolina during 2017. For all cancers combined, SC ranks 14th in the nation for cancer mortality compared to all other states and Washington DC. Rates and rankings by sex and race are also provided.

Table 2. Cancer Mortality by Sex and Race, 2017 South Carolina and the United States*

	US		SC	US rank
	rate	rate	lives lost	
all	152.6	162.4	10,346	14
male	181.6	199.0	5,638	13
female	131.3	135.8	4,708	22
white	153.6	156.8	7,633	21
black	173.7	186.0	2,626	17

*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. Sources: SC Central Cancer Registry, SC Vital Records, CDC NPCR United States Cancer Statistics.

Table 3 shows a comparison of cancer incidence between the United States and South Carolina for selected cancer types, including SC's ranking in the US compared to other states and Washington DC.

Table 3. Cancer Incidence for Selected Cancers, 2017 South Carolina and the United States*

cancer	US	SC		US rank
	rate	rate	new cases	
breast (female)	124.5	129.8	4,291	23
prostate (male)	105.3	107.5	3,488	30
lung/bronchus	53.6	61.6	4,138	13
colon/rectum	36.3	34.7	2,169	36
pancreas	12.3	13.7	883	10

*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. Sources: SC Central Cancer Registry, SC Vital Records, CDC NPCR United States Cancer Statistics.

Table 4 shows a comparison of cancer mortality between the United States and South Carolina for selected cancer types, including SC's ranking in the US compared to other states and Washington DC.

Table 4. Cancer Mortality for Selected Cancers, 2017 South Carolina and the United States*

cancer	US	SC		US rank
	rate	rate	lives lost	
breast (female)	19.9	20.6	695	21
prostate (male)	18.9	21.7	557	5
lung/bronchus	36.7	41.1	2,699	16
colon/rectum	13.5	13.6	864	25
pancreas	11.1	11.8	766	14

*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. Sources: SC Central Cancer Registry, SC Vital Records, CDC NPCR United States Cancer Statistics.

Stage

Cancers diagnosed in late stages lessen the potential for successful treatment and raise the risk of premature loss of life. **Figure 1** below shows the percentage of cancers diagnosed in early and late stages of disease in South Carolina.

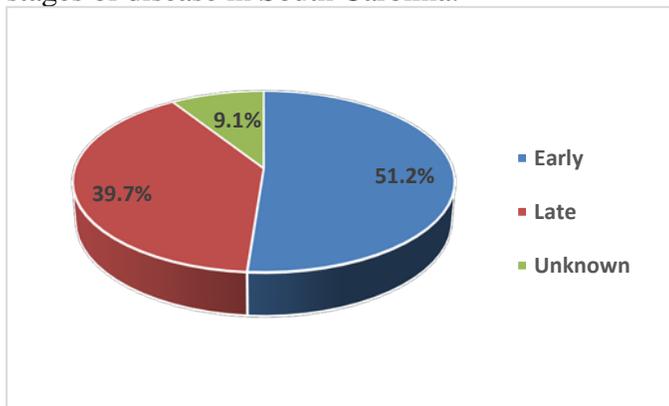


Figure 1. SC Cancers by Stage at Diagnosis, 2017
Source: SC Central Cancer Registry. Statistics include *in situ* cancers.

Breast Cancer

Among women, breast cancer was the most commonly diagnosed cancer in South Carolina in 2017 and the 2nd leading cause of cancer death. There were 4,291 new female breast cancer cases diagnosed and 695 deaths from the disease during 2017 in South Carolina.

Prostate Cancer

Among men, prostate cancer was the most common cancer diagnosed in South Carolina in 2017 and the 2nd leading cause of cancer death. South Carolina had 3,448 new prostate cancer cases diagnosed and 557 deaths from the disease in 2017.

Lung Cancer

Lung cancer was the most common cancer diagnosed in South Carolina in 2017 and was the leading cause of cancer death. In South Carolina there were 4,138 new lung cancer cases diagnosed and 2,699 lung cancer deaths in 2017.

Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer was the 4th most commonly diagnosed cancer in South Carolina in 2017 and the 2nd leading cause of cancer death overall. In South Carolina, there were 2,169 new colorectal cancer cases and 864 colorectal cancer deaths in 2017.

Pancreatic Cancer

Pancreatic cancer was the 9th most common cancer in South Carolina in 2017; however, it was the 4th most common cause of cancer death overall. South Carolina had 883 new pancreatic cancer cases diagnosed and 766 deaths occur in 2017.

Screening

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

The South Carolina 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. 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)

<https://www.scdhec.gov/CancerRegistry>

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/>

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Division of Tobacco Prevention and Control (DHEC)

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

SC Cancer Alliance

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

