

Cancer epidemiology in Lebanon: recent trends from the National Cancer Registry

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Abstract

Introduction & methods

The National Cancer Registry (NCR) in Lebanon was officially restarted in 2002. A report on Cancer in Lebanon 2003 derives its data from a passive capture surveillance system and an active pathology-based recapture system.

Results: In 2003, 7,888 new cases were diagnosed, of which 43% were obtained through the passive capture system, and the other 57% from the active recapture system. Of those cases, 51.3% were in women and 49% in men. Pediatric cases in patients less than 15 years of age accounted for 3.3% of the total. Mean ages of cases among men was 59.3 18.3 years, and among women 55.1±16.8 years ($p<0.05$). The five most frequently diagnosed cancer sites in males in 2003 were: prostate, lung, bladder, colorectum and lymphomas. In females these were: breast, colorectum, ovary, lymphomas and lung. Breast remains the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Lebanon. The age-adjusted incidence rate was 173.52 per 100,000.

Discussion & conclusions

With NCR data, upward trends surmised since the early 1990s are confirmed. Cancer incidence in Lebanon was higher than in other neighboring Arab countries. Special attention should be focused on breast cancer which remains the most frequently diagnosed malignancy in Lebanon. The relative frequency of colorectal cancer requires the setting up of national guidelines for early detection. Two other frequently diagnosed cancers are associated with smoking: lung and bladder, and their prevention should be a strong argument for stringent tobacco control policies.

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