

Fact Sheet - Lung Cancer 2018

Lung cancer: the most fatal cancer

- Lung cancer is the most common cancer worldwide, accounting for 1.8 million new cases and 1.6 deaths in 2012.
- Lung cancer is responsible for nearly 1 in 5 global deaths (1.59 million deaths, 19.4 percent of the total).
- The highest estimated rates of lung cancer are in Northern America (33.8) and Northern Europe (23.7), with a relatively high rate in Eastern Asia (19.2), and the lowest rates in Western and Middle Africa (1.1 and 0.8 respectively).
- More than 90 percent of high-income countries reported that treatment services are available for lung cancer as compared to less than 30 percent of low-income countries.
- Lung cancer risk factors include passive exposure to tobacco smoke, biomass fuels, diesel exhaust, radon, asbestos and other environmental and workplace carcinogens.
- Lung cancer has a five-year survival rate (17.7 percent) which is lower than many other leading cancer sites, such as the colon (64.4 percent), breast (89.7 percent) and prostate (98.9 percent).

Treating lung cancer

- In lower income countries, access to care and cost-effective treatments can reduce the human burden and societal impact of lung cancer.
- Screening with CT scans compared with chest radiography resulted in a 20 percent reduction in lung cancer-specific deaths, but much cheaper and more accessible methods are needed for low-income settings.
- Early-stage lung cancer is treated with curative-intent surgery or radiation therapy.
- Selective patients may benefit from chemotherapy after surgical resection, while patients with local advanced disease may benefit from concurrent chemo-radiotherapy with or without surgery.
- Although advanced stage lung cancer is not curable, many patients may have symptom improvement and survival prolongation by effective treatment.
- Molecular-targeted therapy against epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) mutations and anaplastic lymphoma kinase (ALK) re-arrangements attain tumour response rates of around 70 percent.
- Environmental causes of lung cancer, such as radon and asbestos, can be monitored and reduced. Countries must not be allowed to export asbestos to poorer countries.
- Other known modifiable risk factors, such as biomass fuels, diesel exhausts and air pollution must also be addressed.
- Better screening, early diagnosis and identifying molecular targets for effective and cost-effective modern treatment should improve lung cancer outcomes.
- Globally, efforts to reduce inequity of care and access to effective and affordable treatments are also vital for addressing the lung cancer crises around the world.



About the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS)

[The Forum of International Respiratory Societies](#) (FIRS) is an organisation comprised of the world's leading international respiratory societies working together to improve lung health globally: [American College of Chest Physicians](#) (CHEST), [American Thoracic Society](#) (ATS), [Asian Pacific Society of Respirology](#) (APSR), [Asociación Latino Americana De Tórax](#) (ALAT), [European Respiratory Society](#) (ERS), [International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases](#) (The Union), [Pan African Thoracic Society](#) (PATS), [Global Initiative for Asthma](#) (GINA), and the [Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease](#) (GOLD).

The goal of FIRS is to unify and enhance efforts to improve lung health through the combined work of its more than 70,000 members globally.

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International Union Against
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
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