

Lung Cancer Fact Sheet

Lung cancer: the most fatal cancer

- The most common lethal neoplasm in the world is lung cancer, which kills 1.6 million people each year—and the numbers are growing.
- Of the major cancers, lung cancer remains the most common in the world, with an estimated 1.8 million new cases in 2012. Most (58 percent) of these occurred in less-developed regions.
- Lung cancer is also the most fatal cancer globally.
- In 2012, 1.6 million people died from lung cancer accounting for 19.4 percent of the total deaths attributable to cancer. The ratio of mortality to incidence is 0.87.
- If lung cancer has spread to other organs, the 5-year survival is only about 13 percent.
- Risk factors include passive exposure to tobacco smoke, biomass fuel, diesel exhaust, radon, asbestos and other environmental and workplace carcinogens.

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 tumor response rates of around 70%.
- 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 FIRS

[The Forum of International Respiratory Societies](#) (FIRS) is an organization comprising the world's leading international respiratory societies and working together to improve lung health globally. The members of FIRS are the [American Thoracic Society](#) (ATS), [American College of Chest Physicians](#) (CHEST), [Asociación Latinoamericana De Tórax](#) (ALAT), [Asian Pacific Society of Respirology](#) (APSR), [European Respiratory Society](#) (ERS), [International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases](#) (The Union) and [Pan African Thoracic Society](#) (PATS). Through education and advocacy, FIRS unites and enhances the efforts of 70,000 physicians, nurses, and other health care providers; biomedical researchers; and public health experts to improve lung health around the world.

