

Cancer mortality in Italy, 2008, and predictions for 2012

Tiziana Rosso¹, Matteo Malvezzi^{1,2}, Paola Bertuccio^{1,2}, Eva Negri¹, Carlo La Vecchia^{1,2}, and Adriano Decarli^{2,3}

¹Istituto di Ricerche Farmacologiche "Mario Negri", Milan; ²Department of Clinical Sciences and Community Health, Università degli Studi di Milano, Milan; ³Struttura Complessa di Statistica Medica, Biometria e Bioinformatica, Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Nazionale Tumori, Milan, Italy

ABSTRACT

Aims and background. This report provides up-to-date data and statistics for cancer mortality in Italy in 2008, and predicts the figures and rates for selected cancer sites for 2012.

Methods. Cancer death certifications (for 30 sites) and resident population estimates in 2008 stratified by sex and age were obtained from the World Health Organization (WHO) database (WHOSIS). Mortality rates were age-standardized on the world standard population.

Results. Cancer deaths registered in Italy in 2008 were 172,783 (97,773 men and 75,010 women), corresponding to age-standardized death rates of 144.1/100,000 men and 84.3/100,000 women. The projected cancer deaths in 2012 are 178,000 (100,000 men, 78,000 women) and the corresponding rates 132.5/100,000 men and 80.5/100,000 women. The favorable trend in lung cancer mortality among men was confirmed, with rates of 37.7/100,000 in 2008 (all ages) and 33.3 for 2012. Other tobacco-related cancers also declined in men but not in women, including pancreatic cancer, whose rates tended to level off over the last 3 years. The fall in female cancer mortality rates continues to be led by favorable trends in breast cancer (16.1/100,000 in 2007 and 15.2 in 2012), intestinal cancer, stomach cancer and uterine cancer. However, the female lung cancer mortality was still rising with 7743 deaths in 2008 (9.5/100,000), and lung cancer is predicted to become the second cause of female cancer mortality by 2012 (8,500 deaths, 9.8/100,000).

Conclusions. Reduced tobacco and alcohol consumption are largely responsible for the favorable trends in cancer mortality in men. Advances in treatment and management accounted for the reduced mortality from colorectal cancer, breast cancer, leukemias and a few other cancers, as well as improved diagnosis for colorectal, cervical and breast cancer. The rising epidemic of tobacco-related deaths in women indicates the need for targeted tobacco-control strategies.

Key words: cancer, epidemiology, Italy, mortality, trends, projections.

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Correspondence to: Dr Matteo Malvezzi, Istituto di Ricerche Farmacologiche "Mario Negri", Via Giuseppe La Masa 19, 20156 Milan, Italy.
Tel +39-02-39014669;
fax +39-02-33200231;
email matteo.malvezzi@marionegri.it

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