

CANCER IN NSW: INCIDENCE AND MORTALITY 1995

Marylon S. Coates and Bruce K. Armstrong
NSW Cancer Council, Sydney

This article highlights some of the information available from the latest report of cancer incidence and mortality in NSW, which was published by the NSW Cancer Council in May.¹ A decrease in cancer mortality was confirmed for both men and women. This fall was mainly caused by decreases in rates of death from cancers of the gastrointestinal tract in both sexes, lung cancer in men and breast and reproductive cancers in women. The incidence rate of prostate cancer fell in 1995. This marked the end of a dramatic increase in rates between 1988 and 1994 associated with widespread use of prostate-specific antigen testing.

THE 1995 REPORT

Cancer has been a notifiable disease since 1 January 1972. Notifications are provided by patient-care institutions and pathology laboratories. The annual report of cancer incidence and mortality contains:

- numbers and rates
- the leading cancers
- the most common cancers, by age
- childhood cancers
- trends and projections
- information about specific cancers
- age-specific tables of incidence and mortality
- appendixes about the cancer registry, coding practices, the demography of NSW, statistics and publications.

MOST COMMON CANCERS

For 1995, 26 619 new cases of cancer and 11 403 deaths from cancer were registered. The five most common cancers in men were prostate cancer, lung cancer, melanoma of skin, colon cancer and rectal cancer. The five most common cancers in women were breast cancer, colon cancer, melanoma of skin, lung cancer and rectal cancer.

TRENDS IN INCIDENCE AND MORTALITY

Between 1973–1977 and 1995, the incidence rates of cancer of all sites combined rose by 44 per cent for males and 29 per cent for females. The major contributors to this increase were prostate cancer and melanoma in men and breast cancer in women. Notable trends described in the report include the following:

- Prostate cancer incidence rates fell in 1995 after rapid increases between 1988 and 1994.

- Rates for lung cancer continued to decrease in males and rise in females.
- Cervical cancer was only two-thirds as common as in the early 1970s.
- For all cancers, mortality rates have fallen annually since 1985 by 0.8 per cent for males and 0.6 per cent for females. Age-adjusted mortality for men is the lowest it has been since the cancer registry began operation, and for women it is the lowest since 1980.
- The large increases in incidence of cancers of the prostate in men and breast in women have not been reflected in mortality rates, but the mortality changes for stomach, pancreas and lung cancers and mesothelioma are similar to those for incidence.

Figures 1 and 2 (page 96) show the average annual changes in incidence and mortality from the mid-1980s to 1995.

The full report can be found under 'Statistics' on the Cancer Council's Web site (<http://www.nswcc.org.au>). A printed copy may be ordered from the NSW Central Cancer Registry, NSW Cancer Council, Locked mail bag 1, Kings Cross NSW 1340, telephone (02) 9334 1902.

REFERENCE

1. Coates MS, Armstrong BK. *Cancer in New South Wales. Incidence and Mortality 1995*. Sydney: NSW Cancer Council, 1998.

continued on p. 96

CANCER IN NSW: INCIDENCE AND MORTALITY 1995

FIGURE 1

ANNUAL CHANGES IN CANCER INCIDENCE RATES, NSW 1985 TO 1995

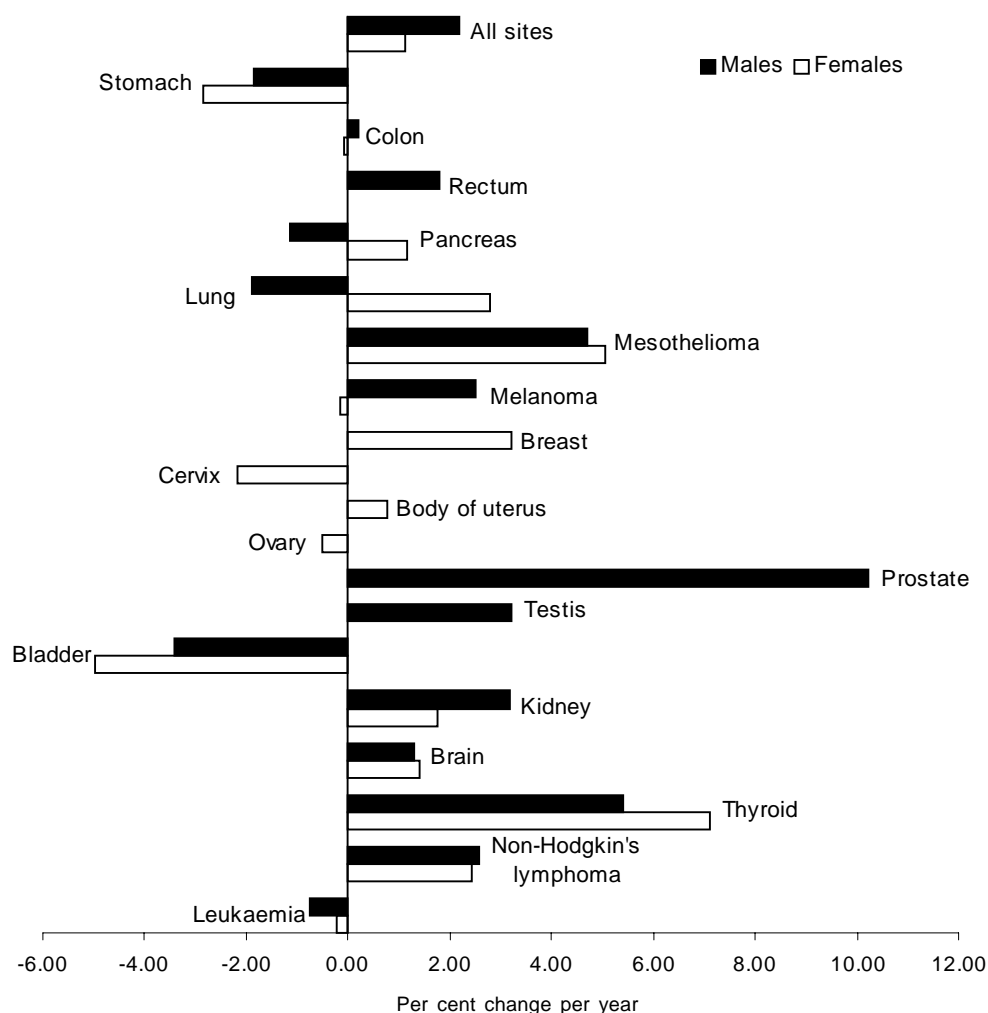


FIGURE 2

ANNUAL CHANGES IN CANCER MORTALITY RATES, NSW, 1985 TO 1995

