

Latest Hunter New England Health cancer statistics released

Cancer is projected to increase at 5000 new cases in NSW every five years with lifestyle factors such as diet, alcohol and lack of physical activity driving increases according to the latest report by the Cancer Institute NSW.

The *Cancer in New South Wales: Incidence and Mortality Report* projects 50,967 new cases in 2021 compared to 38,116 cases in 2009. The number of new cases is projected to increase by 36 per cent in Hunter New England by 2021.

For the first time the Cancer Institute NSW has examined trends by specific cell-types of cancer, such as adenocarcinoma, which are linked to lifestyle factors such as obesity and squamous cell carcinoma which is linked to tobacco smoking, viruses and alcohol.

Releasing the report early this week, Assistant Health Minister (Cancer) Frank Sartor said the increase in lifestyle related cancers was a concern.

“Overall we are seeing rates of smoking related cancers, like bladder and cancers of the head and neck, going down but those related to obesity, such as adenocarcinoma of the oesophagus, are going up.

“Both the USA and Australia are in the top six OECD countries for obesity and also have a high proportion of adenocarcinoma. In comparison Japan and Korea have low rates of obesity and adenocarcinoma.

“Japan has a higher proportion of squamous cell carcinoma of the oesophagus compared to NSW and other Western countries, mainly because this cell type is most strongly related to tobacco and alcohol-related risk factors. Japanese and Korean males have high rates of smoking compared to other OECD countries.

“The NSW Government is making real progress in the fight against cancer, but this report emphasises that we do have more work to do.

“The Cancer Incidence and Mortality report contains the most complete and up-to-date information on cancer in NSW. This cancer report is a reflection of past trends, and shows us where we need to focus more efforts in the future.

“The report shows that there is declining death rates for most cancers and that survival varies by cancer type.”

Hunter New England Health Director of Cancer Services Dr Colum Smith said that given the report's projections that the number of new cases is to increase by 36 per cent in Hunter New England by 2021, it was important that we focus more on maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

“Maintaining a healthy weight, not smoking tobacco and reducing alcohol intake are all ways to help reduce the likelihood of being diagnosed with some cancers,” Dr Smith said.

“A reduction in mortality rates and greater survival rates largely depend on early detection – regular checkups with your family doctor and early attention to potential cancer symptoms are vitally important.

“Hopefully this new report will create greater awareness in the community that cancer is a growing problem – but also highlight the need for everyone to start thinking about the positive changes they can make to lessen their risk of developing cancer.”

Key Findings for Hunter New England AHS:

- The number of new cancer cases is projected to increase by 36 per cent between 2007 and 2021.
- Incidence of melanoma in males and females is higher than the State average.
- Overall incidence of cancer in males is higher than the State average.
- Incidence of lip cancer in males is higher than the State average.
- Incidence of Kaposi’s sarcoma, stomach and liver cancer in males, thyroid cancer in females is lower than the State average.
- Mortality rates are projected to increase by 15 per cent by 2021.
- Overall mortality rates in males are higher than the State average.
- Mortality rates of prostate cancer are higher than the State average.

The full report can be found at www.cancerinstitute.org.au.

Media Enquiries: Emma Gibbs, (02) 6767 7137 or 0428 114 767 (HNE-2101)

For comparisons of cancer incidence between NSW Area Health Services please see the following page

Regional Variation in incidence rates, NSW Area Health Services, 2003–2007

	Sydney South West		South Eastern Sydney & Illawarra		Sydney West		Northern Sydney & Central Coast		Hunter & New England		North Coast		Greater Southern		Greater Western		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
All cancers	LOW	LOW			LOW	LOW			HIGH	HIGH		HIGH	HIGH				
Lip	LOW				LOW				HIGH							HIGH	HIGH
Stomach	HIGH	HIGH							LOW								
Bowel		LOW															
Rectum														HIGH			
Liver	HIGH	HIGH							LOW							LOW	
Bronchus, lung	HIGH						LOW										
Melanoma of skin	LOW	LOW			LOW	LOW	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH				
Breast		LOW						HIGH									
Prostate	LOW						HIGH						HIGH				
Kaposi's sarcoma			HIGH						LOW								
Thyroid		HIGH		HIGH		HIGH				LOW			LOW	LOW			
Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma							HIGH									LOW	
Myeloproliferative disorders													HIGH				
Unknown primary							LOW									HIGH	

HIGH
 LOW
 NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM WHOLE STATE

Regional variation in mortality rates, NSW Area Health Services, 2003–2007

	Sydney South West		South Eastern Sydney & Illawarra		Sydney West		Northern Sydney & Central Coast		Hunter & New England		North Coast		Greater Southern		Greater Western	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
All cancers							LOW		HIGH							
Liver	HIGH	HIGH														
Bronchus, lung	HIGH						LOW									
Melanoma of skin											HIGH					
Mesothelioma					HIGH											
Prostate			LOW						HIGH		HIGH					
Unknown primary																HIGH

HIGH
 LOW
 NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM WHOLE STATE