

Publication Summary



Cancer Incidence in Scotland (2012)

Publication date – 29 April 2014

Revised on – 03 December 2014



About this Release

This release updates the number of cancer registrations in Scotland from 1988 to 2011 and adds registrations for 2012. Approximately 45 types of cancer are included, broken down by age group, sex, NHS Board and Cancer Regional Network.

The 2013 European Standard Population (ESP2013) has been used to calculate the European Age Standardised Rates (EASRs) within this publication. The European Standard Population (ESP), which was first used in 1976, was revised in 2013. Previous reports used ESP1976 to calculate EASRs. Figures using ESP1976 and ESP2013 are not comparable. Therefore, findings from this publication are not comparable with previous ISD reports.

Key Points

- Over the last ten years, age-standardised incidence rates of cancer in Scotland have fallen by 5% in males but increased by 8% in females.
- For both males and females in Scotland combined, lung cancer is still the most common cancer overall, with 5,070 cases diagnosed in 2012 (17% of all cancers), compared to 4,623 cases (15%) of breast cancer and 3,849 cases of colorectal cancer (13%). The ranks and percentages of the three most common cancers are unchanged from 2011.
- Cancer incidence rates and trends in incidence rates show considerable variation between different types of cancer. For instance, the incidence rate of cancer of the kidney for all people has increased by 30% over the last ten years. In contrast, the incidence rate of cancer of the oesophagus has decreased by 9% over the same period.
- Excluding non-melanoma skin cancer, the actual number of cancers diagnosed in Scotland has increased over the last 10 years from 26,743 cases in 2002 to 30,450 in 2012. This is likely to be largely due to an ageing population.
- Details of these statistics can be found by cancer site on the ISD [cancer website](#) and summarised in the [Cancer in Scotland](#) summary report.

Revision – December 2014

The World Age Standardised Rates (WASRs) that appear in the accompanying data tables for this publication have been revised. At Scotland level, the WASRs for all persons have been corrected. The previously published WASRs for males and females were correct. At region and health board level, the WASRs for all persons and confidence intervals for males and females have been corrected. The previously published WASRs for males and females were correct. These corrections have minimal impact on this publication report and do not affect the commentary or key points that were previously published.

Background

The [Scottish Cancer Registry](#) has been collecting information on cancer since 1958. Data collected by the Registry are published by ISD and are used for a wide variety of purposes including: public health surveillance; health needs assessment, planning and commissioning of cancer services; evaluation of the impact of interventions on incidence and survival; clinical audit and health services research; epidemiological studies; and providing information to support genetic counselling and health promotion.

The updated figures show cancer incidence (1988-2012) for many types of cancer, and replace information previously available on the ISD Scotland website. Cancer registrations are believed to be essentially complete for the year 2012, but it is important to note that the cancer registration database is dynamic. In common with cancer registries in other countries, cancer incidence rates in Scotland can take up to five years after the end of a given calendar year to reach 100% completeness and stability, due to the continuing accrual of late registrations coming to light through death certification, for example.

It may be misleading to focus too much attention on any apparent changes in incidence between 2011 and 2012; it is more informative to examine trends in incidence observed over a number of years. Striking changes from one year to the next may occur in the case of rare cancers, but these are likely to reflect random fluctuation caused by small numbers of cases. In such cases it is even more important to examine incidence rates for a number of years aggregated together, rather than focussing on a single year of incidence.

Contact

Andrew Deas
Principal Information Analyst
andrew.deas@nhs.net
0131 275 7030

Doug Clark
Information Analyst
douglasclark@nhs.net
0131 275 7182

Further Information

Further information can be found in the [Full Publication Report](#) or on the [ISD website](#)

About ISD

Scotland has some of the best health service data in the world combining high quality, consistency, national coverage and the ability to link data to allow patient based analysis and follow up. Information Services Division (ISD) is a business operating unit of NHS National Services Scotland - and has been in existence for over 40 years. We are an essential support service to NHSScotland and the Scottish Government Health Department and others, responsive to the needs of NHSScotland as the delivery of health and social care evolves.

Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of 'Official Statistics'. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The Code of Practice is produced and monitored by the UK Statistics Authority which is independent of Government. Under the Code of Practice, the format, content and timing of statistics publications are the responsibility of professional staff working within ISD.

Further information on ISD's statistics, including compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and on the UK Statistics Authority, is available on the [ISD website](#) www.isdscotland.org/About-ISD/About-Our-Statistics/