

# Cancer to Kill 1.3 Million in Europe in 2011

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But the overall number of deaths is likely to remain similar to four years ago because populations are aging and expanding, the researchers said, and the number of women dying from lung cancer is increasing steadily everywhere except in Britain.

"Despite these favorable trends in cancer death rates in Europe the number of cancer deaths remains approximately stable, due to the aging of the population," said Carlo La Vecchia of the University of Milan in Italy, who led the study.

Cancer death rates in wealthy countries are being reduced by better, more targeted medicines and wider use of screening programs to detect tumors earlier, making them easier to treat before they spread to other parts of the body.

The researchers plan to repeat the study to predict cancer deaths for 2012 because accurately predicting death rates can help countries plan allocation of resources and strategies for preventing, treating and managing cancer.

For this year, La Vecchia noted that there was a gap between lower cancer death rates in western Europe, and higher rates in central and eastern parts of the region.

"This is likely to persist for the foreseeable future," he said in a statement on the findings.

La Vecchia's team used a new mathematical model for predicting cancer mortality. They looked at overall rates in the 27-member European Union and at individual rates in six countries: France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and Britain.

Their findings, published in the cancer journal, *Annals of Oncology*, predicted there would be 1,281,466 cancer deaths in the EU in 2011 compared with 1,256,001 in 2007.

Converted into world standardized rates per 100,000 of the population, the figures show that in 2011 there will be a fall since 2007 from 153.8 per 100,000 to 142.8 per 100,000 in men, and from 90.7 to 85.3 in women -- a drop of seven percent in men and six percent in women.

But trends in lung cancer were worrying. Britain has had the highest death rates in women for a decade and is now seeing a leveling off, the researchers said, but female lung cancer death rates are rising everywhere else in the region.

World standardized death rates from lung cancer in women in the EU will rise to 13.12 per 100,000 in 2011 from 12.55 in 2007, they found, and lung cancer has overtaken breast cancer as the top cause of cancer death in women in Poland and Britain.

Lung cancer is often caused by smoking or being exposed to secondhand smoke. Only around 15 percent of people diagnosed with it are still alive five years later, in part because the disease usually spreads silently for years before it causes clear enough symptoms to be detected.

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