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Coverage

United Kingdom and Ireland

Theme

Health and Care

Wide variation in cancer cases and deaths

Cancer atlas of the UK and Ireland

Several cancers strongly linked to smoking tobacco and/or drinking alcohol had distinct geographical patterns in cases and deaths during the 1990s, according to a new report published today* by the Office for National Statistics.

A band across the north of England and across central Scotland had generally higher than average incidence and death rates for cancers of the lung, larynx, lip, mouth and pharynx; rates were lower than average in the south and midlands of England.

The areas with the highest incidence and mortality rates for these cancers were mostly those with high levels of socio-economic deprivation. The geographical patterns for cancers of the bladder, kidney, oesophagus and stomach were similar.

Some other key findings include:

- For cancers of the breast, ovary and prostate, there was little geographical variation in incidence and virtually none in mortality.
- Incidence rates of colorectal cancer were higher than average in Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland. For males they were also higher in the more urban areas of the midlands and north of England, and for females in parts of the south of England.

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***Cancer Atlas of UK and Ireland**

Palgrave Macmillan Price £100.00 ISBN 1 4039 9645 8

Available free on the National Statistics website
www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=14059



- Very wide geographical variations existed in the incidence of cervical cancer, with much higher than average rates in the urban west midlands, in a band across the north of England, and in parts of Scotland. The geographical patterns were not related to local differences in the uptake or efficiency of the cervical screening programme.
- Reducing the incidence and mortality rates for several major cancers in all areas to those found in the areas with the lowest rates would prevent over 25,000 cases of cancer and over 17,000 deaths from cancer each year (see attached table). Around three quarters of these would be of cancers related to smoking tobacco or drinking alcohol.

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. The *Cancer Atlas of the United Kingdom and Ireland 1991-2000* illustrates in detail the geographical patterns in both incidence and mortality for all of the major cancers, and relates them to known risk factors and to levels of socio-economic deprivation.
2. The atlas contains charts at the country and region of England level, and maps at the health authority level, for 21 common cancers (and for all cancers combined). It was produced by staff at the National Cancer Intelligence Centre at the Office for National Statistics (ONS) with the collaboration of many experts, mostly from the cancer registries of the UK and Ireland.
3. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
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Potential for prevention of cancer cases and deaths each year*, UK and Ireland

Cancer	Cases	Deaths
Lung	10,210	8,600
Bladder; larynx; lip, mouth & pharynx; oesophagus; pancreas; stomach	8,710	5,720
Colorectal	5,590	2,370
Melanoma of skin	-	310
Cervix	1,070	450
Total	25,580	17,450

* Estimates made on the basis that rates everywhere could theoretically be reduced to those in the health authorities with among the lowest rates

Source: Cancer Atlas of the United Kingdom and Ireland 1991-2000, Table 2.6