



memo - Magazine of European Medical Oncology

Volume 4, Number 4 (2011), 232-235, DOI: 10.1007/s12254-011-0297-9

SHORT REVIEW

Cancer in the elderly and gender aspects - situation in Tyrol

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Abstract

PURPOSE: The role of gender and age is currently the subject of research in oncology. Therefore, the proportion of elderly cancer patients in Tyrol by cancer site and gender was estimated and the results were compared to recent literature. In addition, to better highlight the public health aspects of the problem, we present age-specific incidence rates. **METHODS:** Based on the Cancer Registry of Tyrol including incidence data with years of diagnosis from 1999 to 2008 for the population of Tyrol, the proportions of patients for the age groups 70+ and 80+ by gender were analysed separately and age-specific incidence rates were calculated. **RESULTS:** 40% of all cancers are diagnosed in the age group 70+ and 15% in the age group 80+. In general, for all cancer sites combined the proportion of women in the age groups 70+ and 80+ is higher than compared to men: 42% *versus* 38% of incidence cases are of age 70+ and 19% *versus* 11% are of age 80+. Especially for the age group 80+, there are four cancer sites with the largest proportion: colorectal, stomach, pancreatic and bladder cancer. In addition, the analysis of the dataset by gender showed that remarkable differences in incident cases for several cancer sites can be observed for females compared to males in both age groups, especially for liver, pancreatic and bladder cancer. Age-specific incidence rates (per 100,000 persons) in age-group 80+ as compared to 50-69 and 70+ showed a threefold increase in both, men and women, for all cancer sites combined as well as for colorectal cancer. With regard to other frequent cancer sites, only minor increases were observed for lung, prostate and breast cancer. **CONCLUSION:** The analysis based on the Cancer Registry of Tyrol shows that there are considerable proportions of cancer cases in the elderly (age 70+ and age 80+) and that gender differences in incidence can be observed in these age groups as well. In addition, age-specific incidence rates underline the importance of cancer in the elderly. Since age- and gender-related effects on cancer survival are of increasing interest, the results provide a basis for further research.

Keywords Age - Cancer - Gender - Geriatric oncology - Incidence - Survival