



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

UTERUS CANCER IN AFRICAN WOMEN: A PUBLIC CONCERN

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Dear Editor,

Cancer is one of the most important health problems in the world¹. Its incidence is rapidly increasing in the developing country². Based on GLOBOCAN estimates, about 14.1 million new cancer cases and 8.2 million deaths occurred in 2012 worldwide. Over the years, the burden has shifted to less developed countries, which currently account for about 57% of cases and 65% of cancer deaths worldwide. In less developed countries, liver and stomach cancer among males and cervical cancer among females are also leading causes of cancer death. Although incidence rates for all cancers combined are nearly twice as high in more developed than in less developed countries in both males and females, mortality rates are only 8% to 15% higher in more developed countries⁴. Difference in incidence and mortality cancer around the world revealed different risk factor. Knowing the statistics of cancer is essential for planning, so this study aimed to investigate the mortality rate of cancer in South Africa in 2012 based on sex.

In this study, we analyzed data related to the number of deaths from cancer worldwide provided by the WHO, Cancer Mortality Database. This database, created and maintained by the Section of Cancer Surveillance at IARC, contains selected

cancer mortality statistics by country, extracted from the World Health Organization (WHO) database⁴. In this study, we analyzed data related to the number of deaths caused by cancer in 2012. In 2012 in South Africa, lung cancer (5140 death), breast cancer (3610 death) and uterus cancer (3114 death) were the common causes of cancer mortality for both sexes. Lung (3441 death), prostate (2675 death) and esophagus (638 death) cancers have the highest number of deaths in men. Uterus cancer (3610 death), breast cancer (3033 death) and lung cancer (1699 death) have the highest number of deaths from cancer among women. The results showed that cervical cancer mortality is high, so that is the second leading cause of cancer death after lung cancer in both sexes in South Africa and the first leading cause of death among women in this region. However, in the USA, the mortality rates were consistently decreasing during the observation period in all age groups⁵. In developing countries, limited access to effective screening means that the disease is often not identified until it is further advanced and symptoms develop. In addition, prospects for treatment of such late-stage disease may be poor, resulting in a higher rate of death from cervical cancer in these countries⁶. Two HPV types (16 and 18) cause 70% of cervical cancers and precancerous cervical lesions. Early first sexual intercourse and multiple sexual



partners, tobacco use and immune suppression, are risk factors for HPV persistence and development of cervical cancer. Then, incidence is higher for ovarian cancer and is increased in developed nations, reflecting differences in lifestyle risk factors⁷. There is a little public awareness about the disease, therefore an urgent need for research into the etiology, screening, prevention, and treatment of this disease is necessary⁷. In conclusion, uterus cancer is a major health problem in African women. Quit smoking, use of condoms in sexual relationships, consumption of fruits and vegetables, physical activity, sexual health and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases are associated with a reduction in the incidence of the cancer. Educational programs creation and prevention of this cancer in women can reduce its mortality rates.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS:

The Authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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