

Cancer is the second most important cause of death globally, after CVD. In 2012, there were 14.1 million new cases of cancer, over half of which occurred in less economically developed parts of the world; in 2015, there were 8.8 million deaths, over two thirds of which occurred in less economically developed areas. The WHO estimates that by 2030, there will be 23.6 million new cases of cancer each year, with the major increase in less economically developed regions of the world. Although all parts of the world are affected by an increasing burden of cancer, the types of cancers that are most common vary considerably from country to country or region to region. For instance, lower-income countries have a greater number of new cases of infection-related cancers (e.g. cervix, liver and stomach). The most commonly diagnosed cancer in men in higher-income countries is prostate, while in less affluent areas, cancers of the oesophagus or stomach are most common. In women, breast cancer is most common among both higher- and lower-income countries, but cervical cancer is particularly common in lower-income countries.

Lung cancer remains the commonest cancer in men worldwide but is declining in higher-income countries. However in some lower-income countries, reflecting smoking patterns over the last two decades, lung cancer continues to rise, particularly among women. Trends in the incidence of various cancers such as prostate, breast and colorectum also vary between higher- and lower-income regions of the world.

Source: Nutrition and cancer: prevention and survival. British Journal of Nutrition 2018.