

# 01 - SECTION 1 Neoplastic Disorders

## SECTION 1 Neoplastic Disorders

Section 1 Neoplastic Disorders Dan L. Longo

### Approach to the Patient

with Cancer The application of current treatment techniques (surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and biologic therapy) results in the cure of nearly two of three patients diagnosed with cancer. Nevertheless, patients experience the diagnosis of cancer as one of the most traumatic and revolutionary events that has ever happened to them. Independent of prognosis, the diagnosis brings with it a change in a person's self-image and in their role in the home and workplace. The prognosis of a person who has just been found to have pancreatic cancer is the same as the prognosis of the person with aortic stenosis who develops the first symptoms of congestive heart failure (median survival, ~8 months). However, the patient with heart disease may remain functional and maintain a self-image as a fully intact person with just a malfunctioning part, a diseased organ ("a bum ticker"). By contrast, the patient with pancreatic cancer has a completely altered self-image and is viewed differently by family and anyone who knows the diagnosis. The patient is being attacked and invaded by a disease that could be anywhere in the body. Every ache or pain takes on

TABLE 73-1 Distribution of Cancer Incidence and Deaths for 2021

MALE	FEMALE	SITES	%	NUMBER	SITES	%	NUMBER
		Cancer Incidence			Prostate		
		299,010		Breast			
		310,720		Lung			
		116,310		Lung			
		118,270		Colorectal			
		81,540		Colorectal			
		71,270		Bladder			
		63,070		Endometrial			

67,880 Melanoma  
59,170 Melanoma  
41,470 Kidney  
52,380 Lymphoma  
36,030 Lymphoma  
44,590 Pancreas  
31,910 Oral cavity  
41,510 Thyroid  
31,520 Leukemia  
36,450 Kidney  
29,230 Pancreas  
34,530 Leukemia  
26,320 All others  
200,520 All others  
207,440 All sites  
1,029,080 All sites  
972,060 Cancer Deaths Lung  
65,790 Lung  
59,280 Prostate  
35,250 Breast  
42,250 Colorectal  
28,700 Pancreas  
24,480 Pancreas  
25,270 Colorectal

24,310 Liver  
19,120 Endometrial  
13,250 Leukemia  
13,640 Ovary  
12,740 Esophagus  
12,880 Liver  
10,720 Bladder  
12,290 Leukemia  
10,030 Lymphoma  
11,780 Lymphoma  
8,360 CNS  
10,690 CNS  
8,070 All others  
87,390 All others  
75,4330 All sites  
322,800 All sites

288,920 Source: From RL Siegel et al: Cancer statistics, 2024. CA Cancer J Clin 74:12, 2024.  
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Oncology and Hematology PART 4 desperate significance. Cancer is an exception to the coordinated interaction among cells and organs. In general, the cells of a multicellular organism are programmed for collaboration. Many diseases occur because the specialized cells fail to perform their assigned task. Cancer takes this malfunction one step further. Not only is there a failure of the cancer cell to maintain its specialized function, but it also strikes out on its own; the cancer cell competes to survive using natural mutability and natural selection to seek advantage over normal cells in a recapitulation of evolution. One consequence of the traitorous behavior of cancer cells is that the patient feels betrayed by their body. The cancer patient feels that they, and not just a body part, are diseased. THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM No nationwide cancer registry exists; therefore, the incidence of cancer is estimated on the basis of the National Cancer Institute's Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) database, which tabulates cancer incidence and death figures from 13 sites, accounting for about 10% of the U.S. population, and from population data from the U.S. Census Bureau. In 2024, 2.001 million new cases of invasive

cancer (1,029,080 men and 927,060 women) were diagnosed, and 611,720 per sons (322,800 men and 288,920 women) died from cancer. The percent distribution of new cancer cases and cancer deaths by site for men and women is shown in Table 73-1. Cancer mortality continues to decline; however, 6 of the 10 most common cancers have increased in incidence by 1–3% in recent years, and troubling disparities among different racial/ethnic groups persist. Mortality is twice as high in black people than white people for cancers of the prostate, stomach, and uterine corpus. Cancer is the cause of one in four deaths in the United States.

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