

Regional Diversity

# NORTHERN AFRICA, WEST & CENTRAL ASIA

In this diverse region with countries at differing stages of the cancer transition, cancers associated with infection, smoking, and excess body weight are all common.

Northern Africa and Central and Western Asia is a large and diverse region characterised by low but increasing cancer incidence rates. The overall number of cases estimated for 2018 in the region was around 745,000, with this number predicted to increase to 1.4 million cases annually by 2040. However, each of the three sub-regions have distinct cancer profiles. **MAP 22.1**

### NORTHERN AFRICA

In Northern Africa, cancer incidence rates are typically about one-third to half of the corresponding rates in Western countries, with incidence rates for all cancer sites combined ranging from less than 90 cases per 100,000 population in Sudan to more than 160 in Egypt in men, and less than 100 in Libya and Sudan to more than 140 in Algeria and Morocco in women. **FIGURE 22.1** Liver cancer is the second most common cancer in both sexes combined, with incidence rates in Egypt estimated to be the second-highest worldwide in both men and women. **FIGURE 22.2**

### WESTERN ASIA

Western Asia is a large region, with close to 400,000 estimated cancer cases annually, but high-quality cancer registry data are available for only few countries, partly due to large numbers of displaced persons and ongoing conflicts. Some of the countries in the region have very high bladder cancer incidence rates; Lebanon notably has the highest estimated incidence rate in the

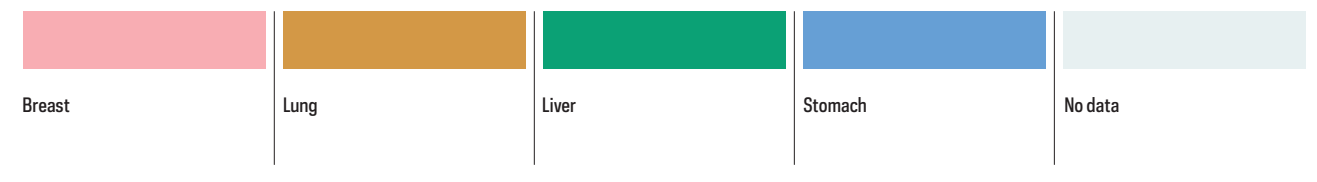
world (40 cases per 100,000 in men), while rates in Israel, Syria, and Turkey also exceed 20 per 100,000 in men. Western Asia also includes the Gulf countries, with specific cancer profiles corresponding to their high national levels of HDI, high prevalence of obesity, and varying levels of smoking uptake, but low alcohol consumption. **MAP 22.2**

### CENTRAL ASIA

Cancer incidence rates in Central Asia are relatively low but increasing. Cancer profiles are consistent with low- to medium-HDI countries, with a high incidence of infection-related cancers such as stomach (11% of all cancer cases) and cervical cancer (6% of all cancer cases). The region forms part of the so-called esophageal cancer belt, which includes Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan and the eastern part of Turkey, with some of the highest incidence rates worldwide, particularly in men.

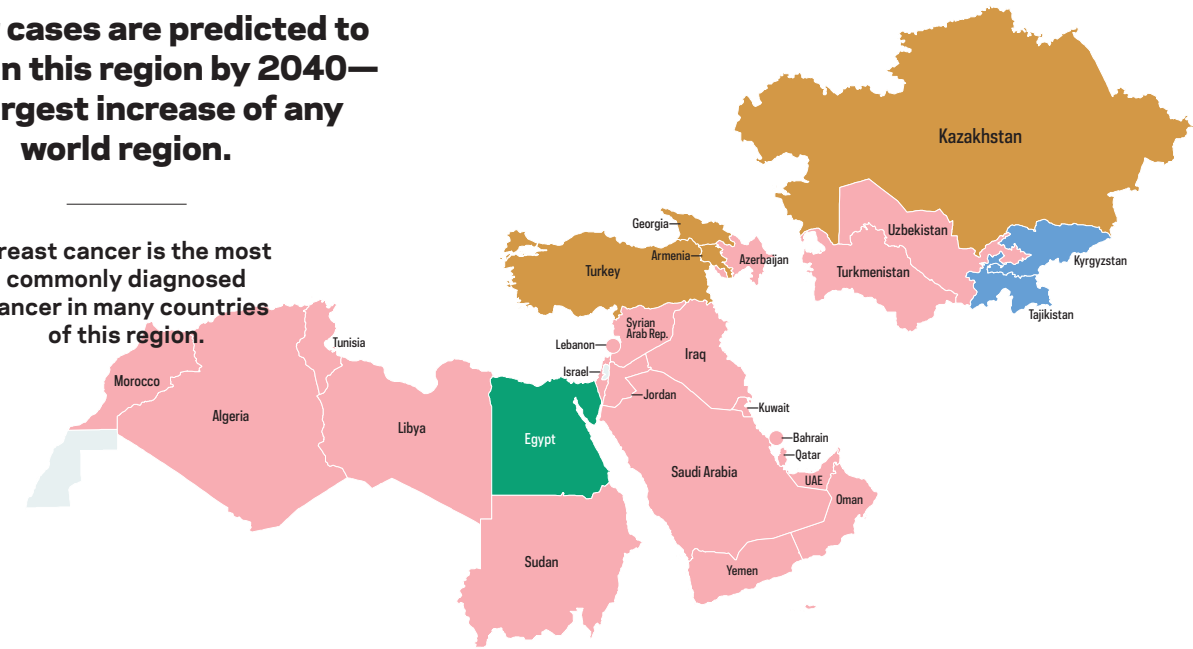
**MAP 22.1**

Most commonly diagnosed cancer in Northern Africa and West and Central Asia, both sexes, 2018



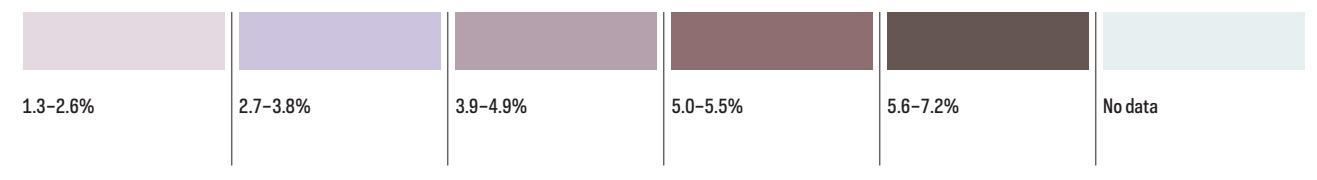
**Cancer cases are predicted to double in this region by 2040—the largest increase of any world region.**

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in many countries of this region.

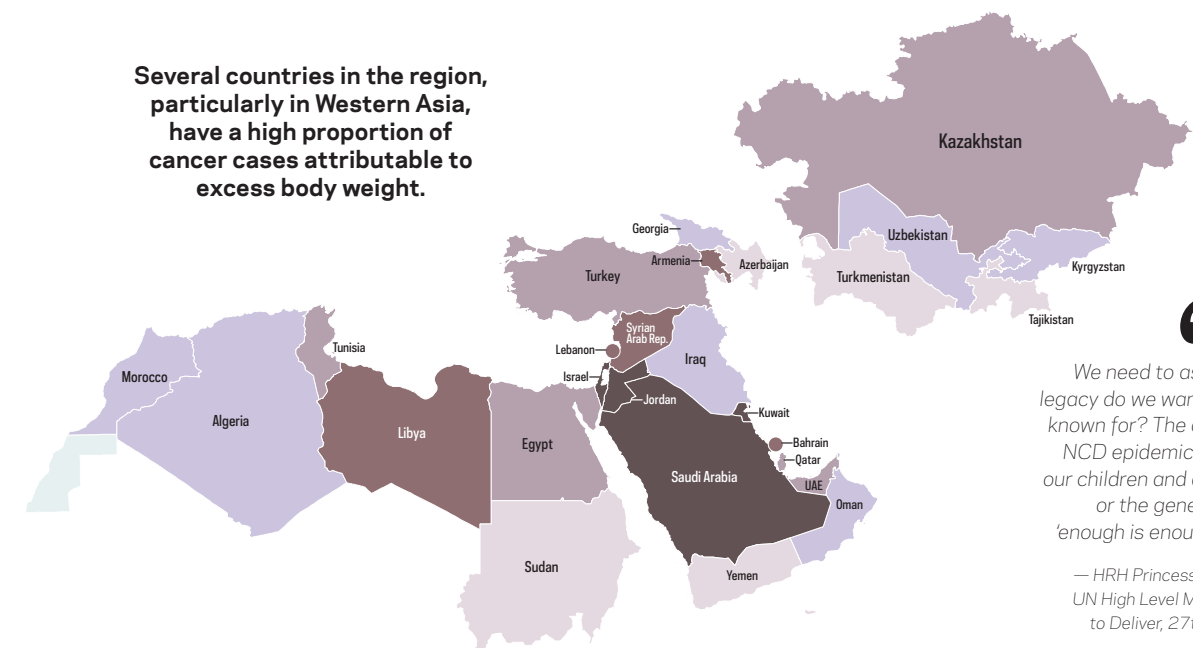


**MAP 22.2**

Proportion (%) of cancer cases attributable to excess body weight in Northern Africa and West and Central Asia, 2012



Several countries in the region, particularly in Western Asia, have a high proportion of cancer cases attributable to excess body weight.

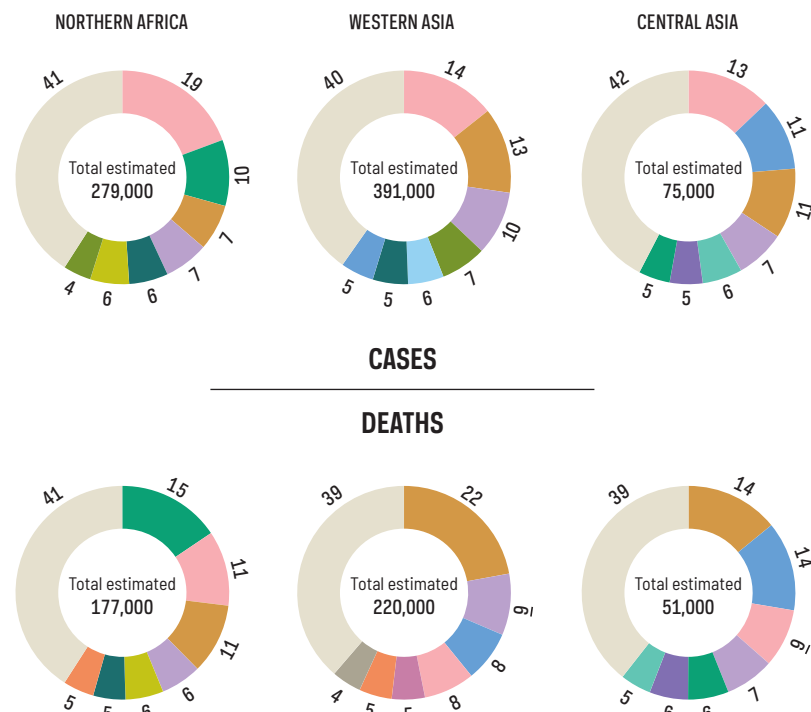


We need to ask ourselves: What legacy do we want our generation to be known for? The one that watched the NCD epidemic destroy the lives of our children and our children's children, or the generation that said 'enough is enough' and took action?

— HRH Princess Dina Mired, The Third UN High Level Meeting on NCDs: Time to Deliver, 27th September 2018

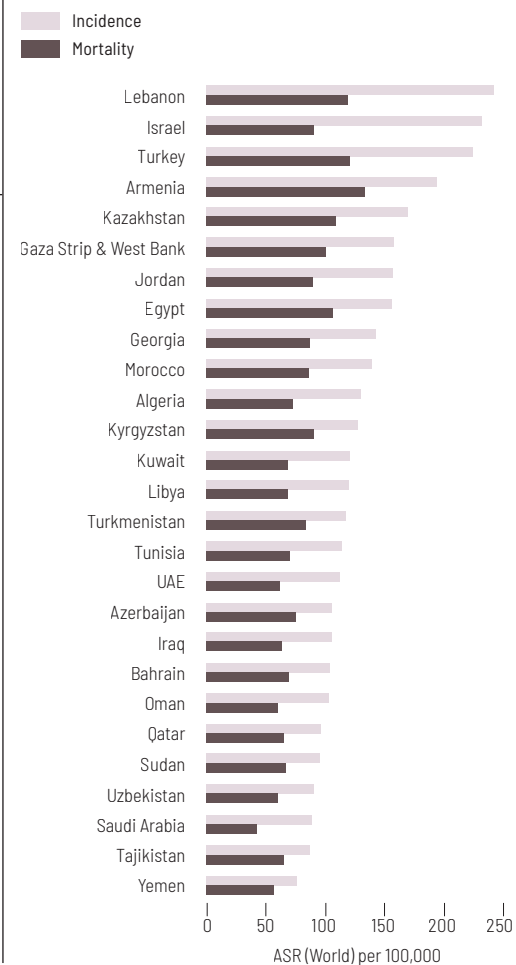
**FIGURE 22.2**

Estimated number\* of new cancer cases vs. deaths and distribution (%) by type, both sexes, 2018



**FIGURE 22.1**

All-sites\* cancer incidence and mortality rates in Northern Africa and West and Central Asia, both sexes combined, 2018



\*Excludes non-melanoma skin cancer.