

Regional Diversity

# SOUTHERN, EASTERN & SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA

Lung, breast, and colorectal cancers are common in this region, in addition to liver and stomach cancers, which are associated with infection.

Southern, Eastern, and South-Eastern Asia is a diverse, densely populated region with 4.2 billion inhabitants, making up 55% of the world population. In 2018, 8.2 million new cancer cases and 5.2 million cancer deaths were estimated in the region, corresponding to around half of the cancer burden worldwide. China alone accounts for 52% of new cancer cases (4.3 million) and 55% of cancer deaths (2.9 million) in the region. Overall, cancers of the lung (1,166,200 new cases, 15% of all cases), colorectum (914,200, 11%) and female breast (845,400, 10%) are the most common cancers.

**FIGURE 20.1** Lung cancer remains the leading cause of death (1,013,100 deaths, 21% of all deaths), followed by stomach (560,500, 11%) and liver cancer (554,000, 11%).

Cancer rates in the region vary widely, with nearly a fourfold difference across countries.

**MAP 20.1** Incidence rates are higher in South-Eastern Asia, and highest in the overall region in the Republic of Korea (314 cases per 100,000 population). In contrast, lower rates are seen in many countries in South Asia, including Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and India (fewer than 90 cases per 100,000). Mortality rates followed a similar pattern by subregion: Mongolia (170 per 100,000) and China (130) had the highest mortality rates, whereas Sri Lanka (51) and India (61) had the lowest rates.

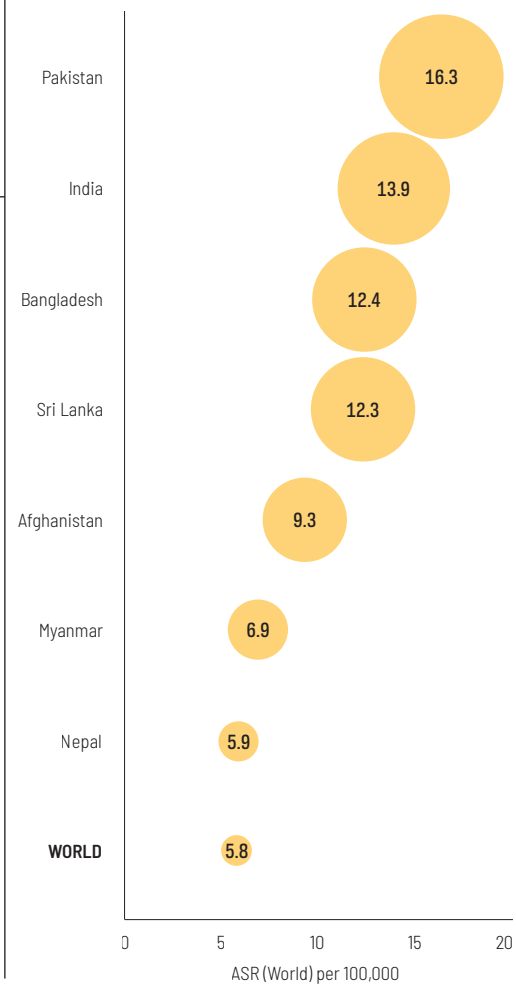
While female breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in nearly all countries among women in Asia, marked differences in the

cancer profiles are observed among males according to subregion. For example, cancer of the oral cavity is a common cancer in much of South and South-East Asia, and a number of countries in this region (India, Sri Lanka) exhibit among the highest rates in the world, **FIGURE 20.2** largely as a result of the high usage of smokeless tobacco products. In South-Eastern and Eastern Asia, two infection-related cancers (liver and stomach cancers) continue to be among the most commonly diagnosed cancers and leading causes of cancer death among males.

**FIGURE 20.3**

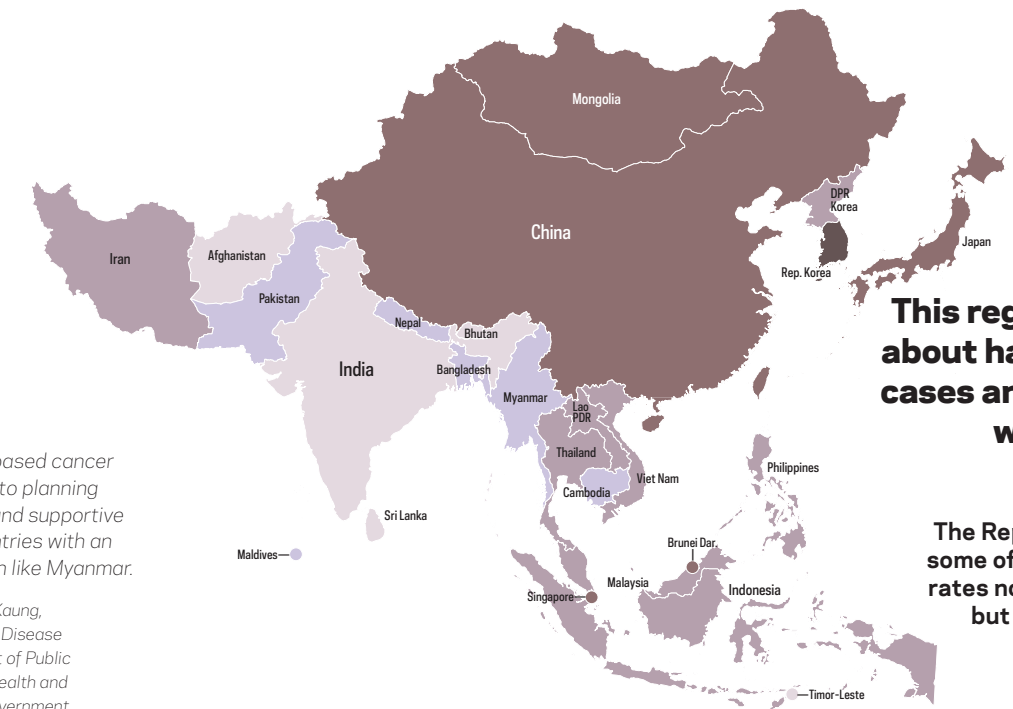
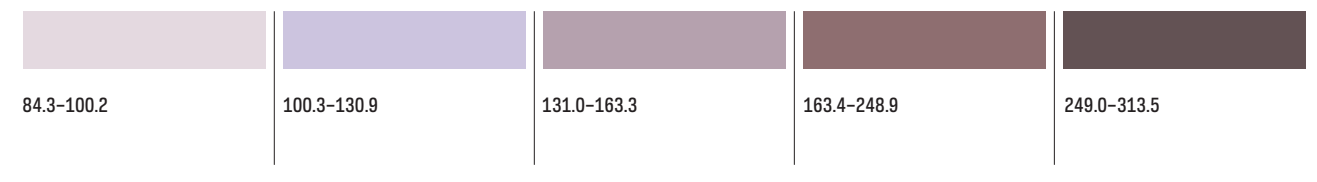
**FIGURE 20.2** Highest lip and oral cavity cancer incidence rates in Southern, Eastern, and South-Eastern Asia, males, 2018

Due to the high use of smokeless tobacco products, rates of lip and oral cavity cancers in some countries in this region are up to three times higher than the global average.



**MAP 20.1**

All cancer sites combined incidence rates in Southern, Eastern, and South-Eastern Asia, age-standardized rate (world) per 100,000, both sexes combined, 2018



This region contributes about half of new cancer cases and cancer deaths worldwide.

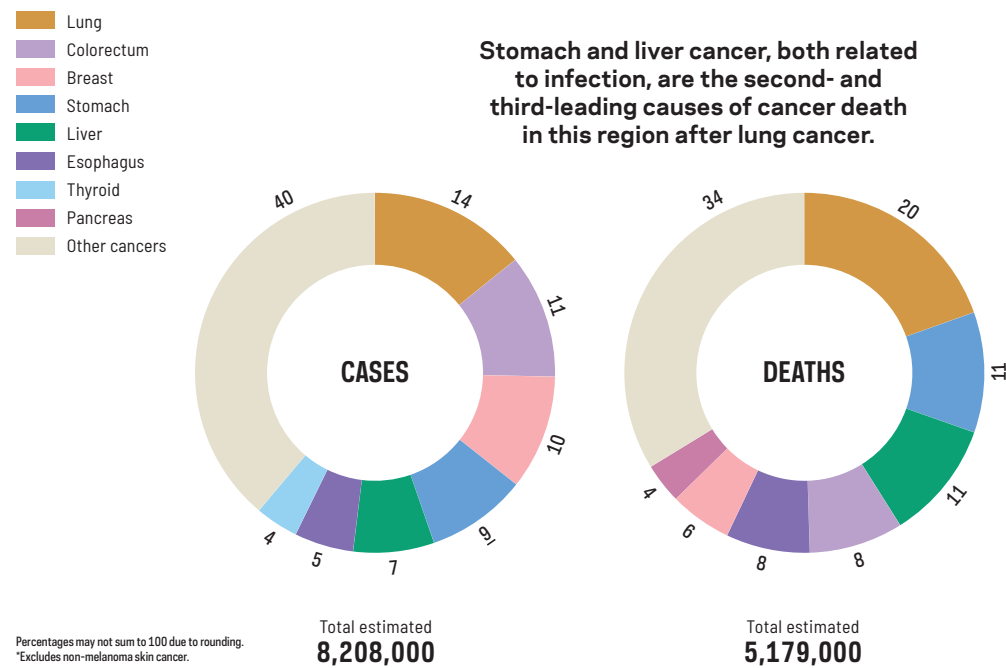
The Republic of Korea has some of the highest cancer rates not only in the region but also worldwide.

“ Accurate population-based cancer data are a first step to planning prevention, treatment and supportive care programs in countries with an increasing cancer burden like Myanmar.

— Dr. Kyaw Kan Kaung, Non-communicable Disease Director, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health and Sports, Myanmar Government

**FIGURE 20.1**

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



Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. \*Excludes non-melanoma skin cancer.

**FIGURE 20.3**

Incidence and mortality rates for the most common cancers in Southern, Eastern, and South-Eastern Asia, 2018

