

# THE BURDEN OF CANCER

Cancer is a major public health and economic issue and its burden is set to spiral. With over 18 million cases in 2018, we can expect 29 million cases by 2040 due to the aging and growth of the population.

Worldwide, there were an estimated 18.1 million cases and 9.6 million cancer deaths in 2018 (including non-melanoma skin cancers), with one in four men and one in five women developing the disease, and one in eight men and one in eleven women dying from it. **FIGURE 10.1** In addition, there were 43.8 million persons living with cancer in 2018 who were diagnosed within the last 5 years.

Half of the new cancer cases and cancer deaths in the world occur in Asia. **FIGURE 10.2** China, with the largest population size in the region and worldwide—1.4 billion inhabitants, representing 19% of the global population in 2018—has the greatest global proportion of new cases (4.3 million cases, 24% of the total) and deaths (2.9 million deaths, 30%). Northern America is second in terms of new cases (2.4 million, 13%), and fourth for cancer deaths (0.7 million, 7%). Close to one fourth of all new cases globally (4.2 million) and one fifth of deaths (1.9 million) occur in Europe, despite the region representing less than one tenth of the global population.

For both sexes combined worldwide, lung cancer continues to be the most commonly diagnosed cancer (2.1 million, 12% of the total) **FIGURE 10.3** and the leading cause of cancer death (1.8 million, 18%) because of its poor prognosis. Female breast cancer is the second most common

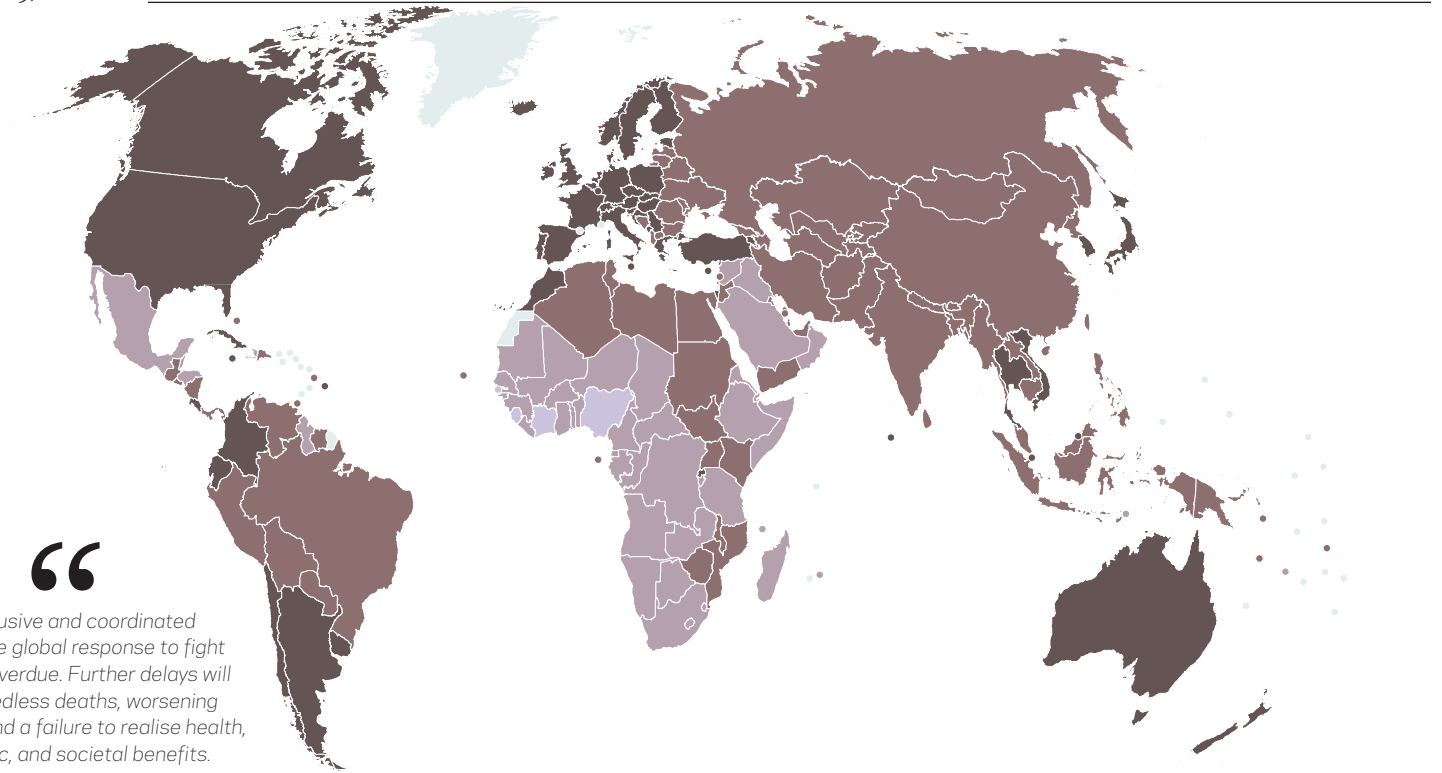
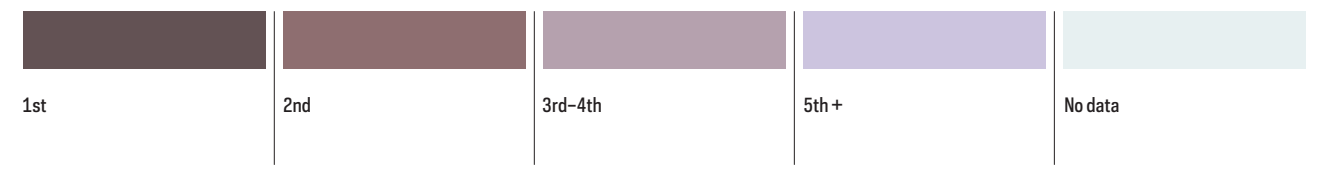
cancer overall (2.1 million, 12%) but the fifth leading cause of cancer death (627,000, 7%) because of its relatively favorable prognosis. As such, it is the most prevalent cancer worldwide (6.9 million women living within 5 years of their breast cancer diagnosis). Colorectal cancer is the third most frequently-diagnosed cancer globally, but second only to lung cancer in terms of mortality (1.8 million cases and 881,000 deaths). Prostate cancer is the fourth most frequently diagnosed cancer, while stomach and liver cancer remain major causes of cancer death in 2018.

Based on projected population aging and growth, the global burden of cancer is set to increase by more than 60% by 2040, from 18.1 million new cases in 2018 to a predicted 29.4 million cases in the year 2040. **FIGURE 10.4**

More broadly, cancer has become a leading cause of death over the last few decades. In terms of premature mortality (defined as death in ages 30–69 years), in the year 2016, cancer was the leading cause of death in 55 (largely high-income) countries, but second (mainly to cardiovascular disease) in an additional 79 countries. **MAP 10.1** With rates of cardiovascular mortality in decline in many countries due to highly successful prevention and treatment, cancer is set to become the leading barrier to increasing life expectancy in this century.

**MAP 10.1**

The ranking of cancer as a leading cause of premature death in 2016 (ages 30–69)



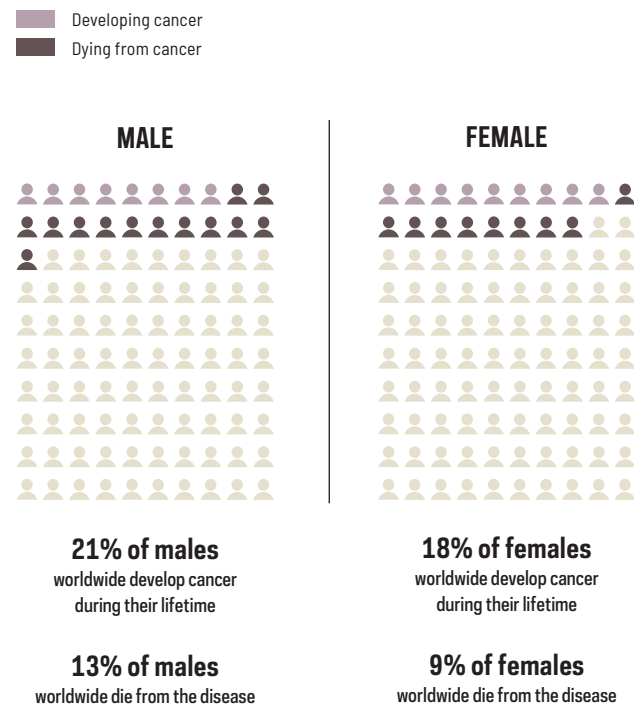
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An inclusive and coordinated large-scale global response to fight cancer is overdue. Further delays will mean needless deaths, worsening inequities, and a failure to realise health, economic, and societal benefits.

— Rifat Atun, global health systems expert, and Franco Cavalli, medical oncologist

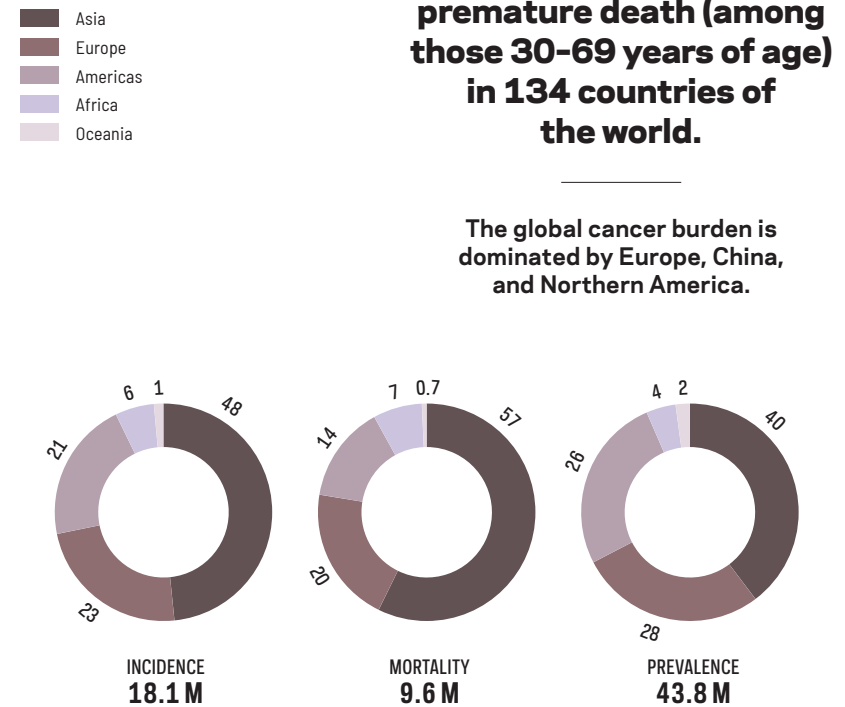
**FIGURE 10.1**

Percentage (%) of males and females developing and dying from cancer worldwide in 2018\*



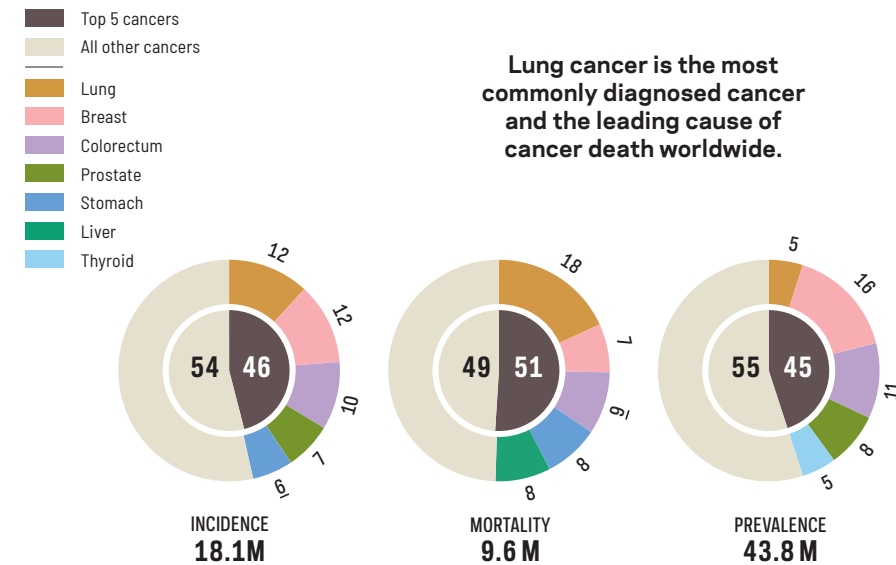
**FIGURE 10.2**

Cancer incidence, mortality and survivors diagnosed within the past 5 years worldwide in 2018\*



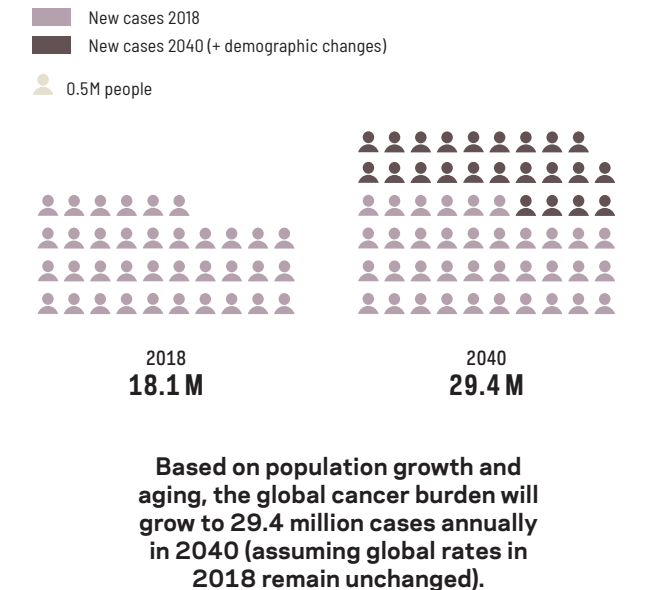
**FIGURE 10.3**

Cancer incidence, mortality and survivors diagnosed within the past 5 years: top 5 cancer sites in 2018 worldwide for both sexes combined\*



**FIGURE 10.4**

Number of new cancer cases in 2018 vs. 2040: impact of demographic projections by 2040



\*Total includes non-melanoma skin cancers