



LUNG CANCER CANADA

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THERE IS NO SINGLE FACE OF LUNG CANCER -- IT IS A DISEASE THAT IMPACTS EVERYONE

Lung Cancer Canada Launches a Report that Spotlights the #1 Killer in Canada

Lung Cancer Realities

- *More Canadian women die from lung cancer than any other cancer.ⁱ*
- *While lung cancer incidence and mortality rates have been declining for Canadian men over the past 30 years, they have steadily risen in Canadian women during the same time period.ⁱⁱ*
- *A national screening program could save 1,200 lives each year, according to experts.ⁱⁱⁱ*
- *The survival rate for patients with lung cancer is low, but can be even lower depending on where you live.^{iv}*
- *Lung cancer only receives 7 per cent of cancer-specific government research funding, despite accounting for 27 per cent of cancer deaths.^v*

TORONTO, ON, November 13, 2014 –Lung Cancer Canada today unveiled a Canadian report, *The Faces of Lung Cancer: Fighting Disease, Fighting Disparity* providing insights about the disease that will touch more than half of Canadians in their lifetime. The report addresses five key priorities based on research from Canada’s leading specialists as well as the patient community. The key priorities cover the importance of screening, stigma, the incredible toll on the Canadian population, the status of current research, and access to diagnosis and treatment.

“Lung cancer screening will save lives and save money - we predict 1,200 Canadian lives can be saved every year,” says Dr. Natasha Leighl, medical oncologist and Lung Cancer Canada President. “Treating people when the cancer has advanced to an incurable stage costs us all more. Not only is it better for the patient to detect and cure lung cancer early, it ultimately saves the Canadian taxpayer about \$10,000 per case.”^{vi}



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Comprehensive screening programs that detect the disease early and improve the chances of survival are lacking across the country. The increased survival rates seen in breast and colon cancer are from national screening programs. By contrast, almost half (48 per cent) of lung cancer diagnoses are made when the cancer is at its most advanced and incurable stage, dramatically reducing the chance for survival.^{vii}

There are some shocking statistics that put the impact of the disease into context. Lung cancer remains the number one cause of cancer death in the country and is responsible for one out of every four cancer deaths.^{viii} Equally disturbing is that every twenty-seven minutes, a Canadian dies from lung cancer. Numbers and data can create the scope, but they simply cannot define the human impact of the disease.

According to a Lung Cancer Canada survey, more than one in five Canadians feels less sympathy for people with lung cancer than those with other cancers because of its link to smoking. The reality, for those diagnosed with lung cancer, more than 15 per cent are lifelong non-smokers and over 35 per cent are ex-smokers, who in many cases quit years before being diagnosed.

"I still find that I have to justify my husband's disease to others. He was healthy, athletic and never smoked. He was still running regularly when he went to the doctor for a spot at the back of his eye. It turned out to be a secondary tumour from his lung cancer. That was three years ago. He was 40 and our girls were 5 and 7," says Natalie Deschamp, wife of someone living with lung cancer, Ottawa.

Research also shows that non-smoking women are significantly more likely to be diagnosed with lung cancer than non-smoking men.^{ix} In 2014 alone, 9,700 Canadian women will die from lung cancer. This is more than the 8,050 who will die of all other



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women's cancers combined (breast, ovary, uterus and cervix). While Canadians are very aware of the importance of breast cancer, they don't realize that almost double the number of women die from lung cancer in Canada every year.^x

The report also notes that there are provincial differences in access to diagnosis, treatment, and survival outcomes. One-year survival rates vary across the country. Some of these differences may be related to access and resources.

Dr. Paul Wheatley-Price, medical oncologist and Chair of Lung Cancer Canada's Medical Advisory Committee comments, "every Canadian should have access to the same level of care, no matter where you live. This means the same access to gold standard therapies, including life saving drugs or modern surgical and radiotherapy technologies. The reality that there are such stark differences across different provinces should be alarming to Canadians -- this is simply unacceptable and something we need to change."

"We're very lucky with the overall healthcare system that we have. The problem, however, is that not everyone has as prompt or complete access as they should to the services and treatments they need. I had to advocate strongly for myself to ensure I got what I needed. Not everyone is able to do that, so they miss out. That's not fair," says Jessica Miller a 77-year-old lung cancer patient from Montreal.

Every day, the medical community gains new perspectives on this devastating disease and progress continues to be made as understanding of the disease increases and new tests and treatments are developed. However, despite the terrible toll on life from lung cancer, it receives much less attention than other cancers when it comes to research funding. Less than one per cent of private cancer donations go to lung cancer. Ultimately it is research that will improve outcomes and yield more choices for patients at all stages of diagnosis and treatment.

The lung cancer community will continue to create an environment that will see improvements in all five areas included in the report - the national patient voice for the



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disease strongly encourages all Canadians to do their part to help. For more information on the report, please visit www.lungcancercanada.ca.

About Lung Cancer Canada

Based in Toronto, Lung Cancer Canada (LCC) is a national charitable organization that serves as Canada's leading resource for lung cancer education, patient support, research, and advocacy. LCC's mission is four-fold: 1) to increase public awareness of lung cancer, 2) to support and advocate for lung cancer patients and their families, 3) to provide educational resources to patients, family members, healthcare professionals, and the general public, and 4) to raise funds in support of promising research opportunities.

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 - ^v *Canadian Cancer Research Alliance, 2007*
 - ^{vi} *Cressman S: Canadian Journal of Thoracic Oncology*
 - ^{vii} *CPAC Lung Cancer in Canada: a supplemental system report*
 - ^{viii} *Canadian Cancer Statistics, 2014*
 - ^{ix} Bringham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. *Our of the Shadows: Women and Lung Cancer*, Boston
 - ^x *Canadian Cancer Statistics 2014*