

People living with cancer

The number of people living with cancer is set to double by 2030

The number of people living with a cancer diagnosis in the UK is set to double from more than 2 million in 2010 to 4 million by 2030.¹ (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Number of people living with a cancer diagnosis in the UK

The number of people living with cancer is expected to grow by around 1 million every decade between 2010 and 2030.

The proportion of the population living with cancer is also set to double so that in 2030, 1 in every 17 (6 per cent) of us will have had a cancer diagnosis, an increase from 1 in 33 (3 per cent) in 2010. This increase will be seen for both men and women.

The number of men with prostate cancer and women with breast and lung cancer are expected to more than double from 2010 to 2030. The number of people with colorectal cancer are expected to double from 2010 to 2030. The number of men with lung cancer is expected to show only a modest increase from 2010 to 2030.

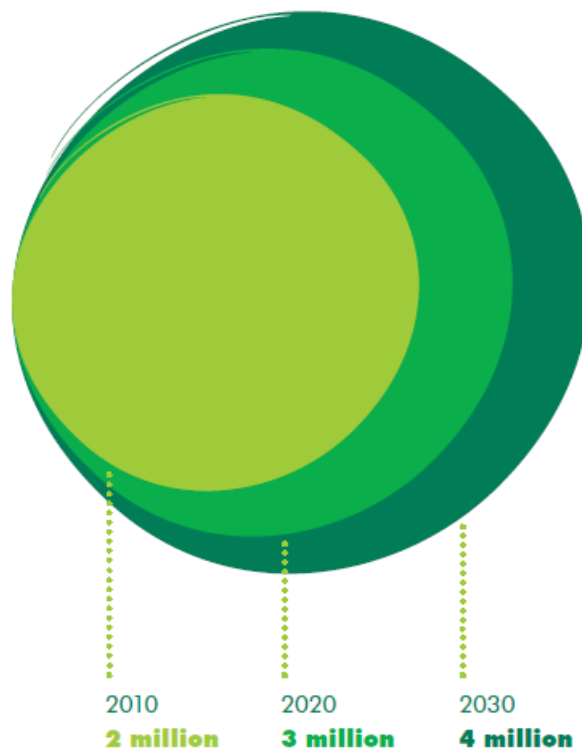
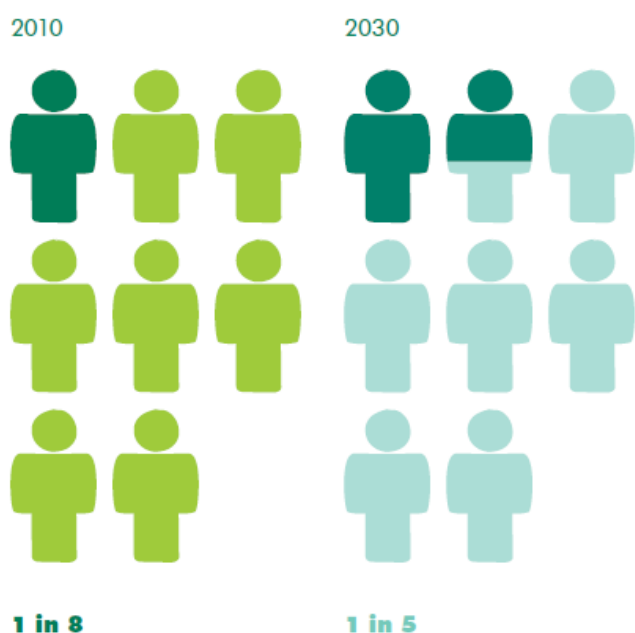


Figure 2: Proportion of older people (65 and over) living with a cancer diagnosis in the UK



Nearly 1 in 5 (19%) older people (65 and over) will have had a cancer diagnosis by 2030 compared to 1 in 8 (13%) in 2010 (Figure 2). This increase is highest for older people compared to other age groups. This is mainly driven by increases in the number of people living with breast and prostate cancer in this age group.

By 2030 older people will account for 73% of the total number of people with a cancer diagnosis and increase from 63% in 2010.



More than twice as many people will be long term cancer survivors by 2030 – 2.7 million people by 2030

The majority (66%) of people with a cancer diagnosis will be at least five years from diagnosis by 2030 an increase from 62% in 2010.

The increase in numbers is the highest in this group (at least 5 years from diagnosis) as compared to the number of people diagnosed in the last year or those 1-5 years from diagnosis (with the exception of lung cancer in males).

The proportion of men at least 5 years from their prostate cancer diagnosis is expected to triple from (379 per 100,000) in 2010 to (1,143 per 100,000) in 2030.

For lung cancer the rates for women living at least 5 years from their lung cancer diagnosis are expected to more than double from 2010 (33 per 100,000) to 2030 (79 per 100,000) whereas for men the rates are expected to decrease slightly.

The increase in the number of long term survivors will have an impact on the quantity and nature of health and social care required by cancer survivors, with a greater focus on rehabilitation and the long-term, post-treatment effects of cancer.

The research

This new study published in the British Journal of Cancer makes, for the first time ever, long-term projections of the number of people living with a cancer diagnosis in the UK – cancer prevalence. Researchers, from Thames Cancer Registry (King's College London) and University College London, used cancer registry data to estimate cancer prevalence in 2009 and developed a model to predict prevalence based on projected cancer incidence, survival and population demographics. A number of possible scenarios were considered and are presented in full in the British Journal of Cancer. Scenario one, which assumes existing trends in incidence and survival will continue (except for prostate cancer), is presented here and is considered the most empirically based scenario.

Projections of cancer prevalence can be used to better understand the future burden of cancer and subsequent health and social care resources required to support this.

Why is cancer prevalence increasing?

The population of the UK is growing and ageing. Cancer incidence rates are highest in older people with over 60 per cent of new cases diagnosed each year in the UK in people aged 65 and over.² With high cancer incidence rates for older people, increasing incidence rates (with the exception of male lung cancer) and better cancer survival, thanks to advances in cancer treatment as well as a greater focus on earlier diagnosis, cancer prevalence is set to continue to rise.

References and notes

1. Maddams J, Utley M and Møller H. 2012. Projections of cancer prevalence in the United Kingdom, 2010–2040. *British Journal of Cancer* advance online publication 14 August 2012; doi: 10.1038/bjc.2012.366 <http://www.nature.com/bjc/journal/vaop/ncurrent/abs/bjc2012366a.html>. Projections scenario 1 presented here.
2. Cancer Research UK. Cancer incidence by age – UK statistics. <http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/cancerstats/incidence/age/> (accessed October 2012)

Figure 3: Number of people with a cancer diagnosis by time since diagnosis in the UK

