

New cancer statistics

Death rates from cancer in Scotland are continuing to fall but there have been significant increases in rates of some cancers.

These were among the key findings of the latest statistics – Cancer Mortality (2009) and Cancer Incidence (2008) – which were published today by ISD Scotland.

The statistics also show:

- * In 2009, 15,119 people died from cancer
- * Age-standardised cancer mortality rates have decreased by around 9 per cent from 1999-2009
- * Mortality rates for the four most common cancers (lung, bowel, breast and prostate) are decreasing with the exception of lung cancer in women, which increased by 12 per cent from 1999-2009 (mortality rate in men decreased by 20 per cent)
- * 13,800 men and 15,000 women were diagnosed with cancer in 2008
- * Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women with the incidence increasing by 8 per cent over the last decade
- * There were significant increases in cases of malignant skin cancer (up 68 per cent in men and 71 per cent in women over the last decade) and liver cancer (up 51 per cent in men).

Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon said:

“One in three people will develop cancer during their life but the good news is, as today’s statistics show, more people are living with and beyond cancer. Earlier diagnosis and better treatment means we are seeing mortality rates falling.

“But worryingly we are also seeing evidence that our lifestyle choices are resulting in increasing cases of cancer. Skin cancer is clearly linked to excessive exposure to sunlight or use of sunbeds. Those with alcoholic cirrhosis of the liver –

a disease that has increased markedly in Scotland in recent years – have a significantly increased risk of cancer of the liver. The incidence of both types of cancer is increasing sharply.

“That’s why this government is taking strong action to help people adopt healthy lifestyles. We have already banned sunbed use for under 18s and are taking decisive action to tackle Scotland’s unhealthy relationship with alcohol.

“Our Framework for Action contained more than 40 measures designed to tackle the problem some of which – including minimum pricing per unit of alcohol – are being taken forward through the Alcohol Bill which is currently making its way through the Scottish Parliament.

“MSPs will vote on the bill soon and today’s statistics underline just why we need this legislation – to stem the rising incidence of liver cancer and the harm that alcohol does in our society.”