

Half of all cancer patients now survive at least 10 years

29 April 2014

Fifty per cent of people diagnosed with cancer today will survive their disease for at least 10 years, according to landmark figures published by Cancer Research UK today.

In the early 1970s just a quarter of people diagnosed with cancer survived 10 years.

Today, Cancer Research UK sets out an ambitious new strategy to accelerate progress with the ambition that three-quarters (75 per cent) of all [cancer patients](#) diagnosed in 20 years time will survive at least 10 years.

Women with breast cancer now have a 78 per cent chance of surviving at least a decade, compared to only 40 per cent 40 years ago.

Ten-year [survival](#) for men with testicular cancer has jumped from 69 to 98 per cent since the 1970s and, for people diagnosed with malignant melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, 10-year survival has leapt from 46 to 89 per cent.

But it's not all good news. Just one per cent of pancreatic cancer patients and five per cent of [lung cancer patients](#) diagnosed today are expected to survive 10 years. Cancer Research UK has worked to increase research into these cancers but change has been slower than hoped – which is why a renewed focus is needed to make faster progress.

Survival from oesophageal cancer is still far too low at 12 per cent, although 40 years ago it languished at around four per cent. Brain tumour survival is also very low at just 13 per cent, despite more than doubling in the last 40 years.

Saving more lives from all cancers, including those that are hard to treat, is the overriding focus of Cancer Research UK's new strategy, launched today. The strategy details a raft of measures aimed at accelerating the speed of progress.

Ensuring cancer patients are diagnosed at the earliest possible stage of their disease, when treatment is more likely to be successful, is a key priority for the charity. And it plans to fund more scientists from different disciplines because collaboration is key to moving discoveries from the laboratory into the clinic to make sure patients will benefit sooner.

Professor Michel Coleman, head of Cancer Research UK's Cancer Survival Group at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, whose team produced the survival figures, said: "These results come from detailed analysis of the survival of more than 7 million cancer patients diagnosed in England and Wales since the 1970s. They show just how far we've come in improving cancer survival, but they also shine a spotlight on areas where much more needs to be done.

"We want to see people with every type of cancer get the same chances of living a long life. This won't be easy, but the progress reported here over the last 40 years shows we're moving in the right direction."

Dr Harpal Kumar, Cancer Research UK's chief executive, said: "Every year, tens of thousands more people are surviving cancer a decade after diagnosis, showing that we're gradually reversing the tide on this devastating disease. This is thanks to the work of our scientists and doctors, but none of it would be possible without the generosity of the British public, whose donations we rely on to fund all our research.

"But each year more and more people are diagnosed with cancer. We believe no one should be diagnosed too late for their life to be saved and effective treatments should be available to every patient, no matter what type of cancer they have.

"Achieving our ambition to see three-quarters of all [cancer](#) patients surviving their disease in the next

20 years will be challenging. But with the continued commitment of our scientists, doctors and nurses and the generous support of the British public, we hope to see our progress accelerate over the coming years to make this a reality."

More information: The cited figures are available online: www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancerstats/survival/

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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