Facts About Cancer

Cancer is a worldwide health concern affecting people of all ages, races and ethnicities. High-quality, innovative, collaborative research has been, and continues to be, the path to finding new and alternative ways to prevent and cure cancer. As a global scientific partner and facilitator of cancer research initiatives, the American Association for Cancer Research works side-by-side with scientists, patients and families as they face cancer’s challenges. Tremendous strides have been made in the prevention, treatment and cure of many types of cancers, but much more work needs to be done.

The Cancer Crisis

• In the United States, men have approximately a one-in-two lifetime risk of developing cancer and women have a one-in-three risk.
• Cancer is the second most common cause of death in the United States, exceeded only by heart disease, and accounting for nearly one of every four deaths.
• This year, approximately 1.66 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer and more than 585,000 are expected to die, which is almost 1,600 people per day.
• Tobacco use causes 18 types of cancer, and smoking is directly linked to nearly one-third of all cancer deaths each year, including 85 percent of all lung cancer cases.

Source: Cancer Statistics, 2014, published by the American Cancer Society

The Cost of Cancer

• The National Institutes of Health estimates that the overall costs of cancer in 2013 were $263.8 billion: $124.6 billion for direct medical costs (total of all health expenditures) and $139.2 billion for indirect mortality costs (costs of lost productivity due to premature death).

Source: National Institutes of Health

Cancer Research Saves Lives

• The National Cancer Institute estimates that approximately 13.7 million Americans with a history of cancer were alive in 2013.
• Among adults, the five-year survival rate for all cancers combined is approximately 68 percent – an increase of 19 percent since 1975.
• The five-year survival rate for all childhood cancers combined is approximately 83 percent – an increase of 30 percent since 1975.

Source: Cancer Trends Progress Report, National Cancer Institute

Cancer Treatment Advances

• In 2013, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved eight innovative cancer drugs including two drugs that were granted breakthrough therapy designation. the FDA also granted approval for a drug to treat women with high-risk, early-stage breast cancer before they undergo surgery.

Source: FDA 2013 Innovative Drug Approvals

Cancer Research Boosts the Economy

• In 2013, NIH investment supported more than 402,000 jobs at over 2,500 research institutions and generated $57.8 billion in economic activity.
• Due to sequestration, NIH cut its 2013 budget by 5.1% or $1.6 billion, resulting in 640 fewer competitive research grants issued than in 2012.

Source: Profiles of Prosperity, United for Medical Research