

The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project Factsheet

The largest study of its kind in this country, *The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project* is a study of 300,000 Canadians that will explore how genetics, environment, lifestyle and behaviour interact and contribute to the development of cancer. This document highlights key facts about cancer in Canada and provides further background on *The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project*.

Cancer in Canada

Cancer is a complicated, complex set of approximately 200 malignant diseases¹. It affects all Canadians, either personally, through family and friends, or through its significant economic and social costs.

Cancer incidence and mortality

- Cancer incidence continues to rise annually in Canada by two to three per cent, while the number of people living with cancer is growing at least twice that rate²
- This year approximately 166,400 Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer²
- An estimated 40 per cent of Canadian women and 45 per cent of Canadian men will develop cancer during their lifetime²
- Canada's growing and aging population is leading to an increase in cancer cases³
- Approximately one out of every four Canadians will die from cancer³
- This year approximately 73,800 Canadians will die from the disease²

Improvements in cancer outcomes

- Cervical cancer incidence rates in Canada have decreased from 15.4 per 100,000 in 1977 to an estimated 7.5 per 100,000 in 2006²
- Lung cancer mortality in males is decreasing following a decline in tobacco use - in 2008 it is estimated that 59 men per 100,000 will die of lung cancer compared to 72 men per 100,000 in 1979²
- Breast cancer deaths in females are falling with an approximate reduction of 31 deaths per 100,000 in 1985 to 24 deaths per 100,000 in 2003²
- Excluding lung cancer, cancer mortality rates have dropped 20 per cent in women since 1979²

Cost of cancer

- At more than \$12.2 billion annually, cancer is the most costly illness in losses due to premature mortality (assessed as lost labour productivity, including wages, CPP/QPP, EI and workers compensation)⁴
- In 2002, cancer accounted for about \$17.9 billion in costs (direct and indirect) in Canada⁵
- Hospitalization of cancer patients costs approximately \$2.1 billion a year, in addition to physician costs and drug treatment costs⁵
- In 1998, \$210 million was spent on drugs for cancer treatment³

The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project

Q: What is the *Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project*?

A: The largest of its kind in this country, this pan-Canadian study will track up to 300,000 randomly selected Canadians (between the ages of 35 and 69), from a wide range of backgrounds and regions, over a period of at least 20 to 30 years to explore the complex association of factors - genetic, lifestyle, and environmental - that lead to cancer.

The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project is a prospective cohort study, meaning researchers will follow a large group of people over a long period of time. It is designed to regularly capture data from average Canadians and follow them over the duration of the project. This will help to secure a more complete picture of people's health and habits including what they eat and how much they exercise, as well as environmental variables such as where people work and live. The impact of screening and prevention programs will also be assessed.

Q: Why is the study needed in Canada?

A: We have made significant progress in preventing many cancers, and in managing and treating others, resulting in improved survival rates. However, reducing the overall prevalence of cancer means we need to better understand how and why people develop the disease in the first place.

Q: What does *The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project* hope to achieve?

A: The positive impact of *The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project* will be significant and far-reaching:

- We will better understand which factors are likely to lead to cancer and other life-threatening and chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease
- We will explore how Canadians are affected by prevention and public health programs in different parts of the country, which will inform the development of more effective prevention and public health initiatives - the cornerstones of reducing cancer rates in Canada - now and into the future
- By tracking this group for a long period of time, we have the opportunity to examine cancer outcomes over many years of experience and expand the study focus to test new hypotheses as we learn more about cancer
- We will create a national bank of population health information with unprecedented potential for exploring and answering significant health questions that will benefit Canadians for years to come

Q: How will the data be collected?

A: Information on health and lifestyle will be collected through regular surveys, as well as the collection of blood and other specimens. Researchers will regularly examine the data and, in the short-term, expect to gather insight into how Canadians are responding to public health and prevention programs. Longer-term, researchers will be looking for patterns among people who develop cancer. Over the life of the study, researchers will be able to test theories about cancer risks, and will be able to map the onset of other life-threatening and chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.

Q: Who is managing *The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project*?

A: *The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project* is being driven forward by five partner organizations: The BC Cancer Agency, the Alberta Cancer Board, Cancer Care Ontario with the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, Quebec's CARTaGENE project and Cancer Care Nova Scotia with Dalhousie University collaborating for work in the Atlantic Provinces.

Q: How is the study being funded?

A: Study funding is comprised of \$42 million in support from The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, along with regional commitments of \$41 million. These committed funds will be leveraged to trigger further investment with an anticipated total of more than \$100 million in six to nine months.

For more information on The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, please go to:

www.partnershipagainstcancer.ca

Q: What are the benefits of the way this project has been designed?

A: *The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project* is a prospective cohort study, meaning researchers will follow a large group of people over a long period of time. It is designed to regularly capture data from average Canadians who are randomly selected from a wide range of backgrounds and regions. The goal is to secure a more complete picture of people's health and habits including what they eat and how much they exercise, as well as environmental variables such as where people work and live. The impact of screening and prevention programs will also be assessed. The goal is to enroll 300,000 people and follow them over the duration of the project.

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¹ Cancer Types, located at: <http://www.cancercare.on.ca/english/pcs/cancertypes/>. Accessed on May 23, 2008.

² Canadian Cancer Society/National Cancer Institute of Canada: Canadian Cancer Statistics 2008

³ Canadian Cancer Society/National Cancer Institute of Canada: Canadian Cancer Statistics 2007

⁴ Health Canada. Economic Burden of Illness in Canada, 1998. Ottawa: Health Canada, 2002

⁵ J. Patra et al. Economic Cost of Chronic Disease in Canada: 1995-2003; 13