

Lung Cancer 2019 Fact Sheet

Lung cancer: the most fatal cancer

- Lung cancer is the most common cancer worldwide, accounting for more than 2 million new cases and 1.7 million deaths in 2018.
- Lung cancer is responsible for nearly one in five global deaths.
- The highest estimated rates of lung cancer are in Hungary (56.7) and Serbia (49.8).
- More than 90% of high-income countries reported treatment services are available for lung cancer as compared with less than 30% of low-income countries.
- Lung cancer risk factors include active and passive exposure to tobacco smoke, biomass fuels, diesel exhaust, radon, asbestos and other environmental and workplace carcinogens.
- The lung cancer five-year survival rate (17.7%) is lower than many other leading cancer sites, such as the colon (64.4%), breast (89.7%) and prostate (98.9%).

Treating lung cancer

- In lower income countries, access to care and cost-effective treatments can reduce the human burden and societal impact of lung cancer.
- Screening with CT scans compared with chest radiography resulted in a 20% reduction in lung cancer-specific deaths, but much cheaper and more accessible methods are needed for low-income settings.
- Early-stage lung cancer is treated with curative-intent surgery or radiation therapy.
- Selective patients may benefit from chemotherapy after surgical resection, while patients with local advanced disease may benefit from concurrent chemo-radiotherapy with or without surgery.
- Although advanced stage lung cancer is not curable, many patients may have symptom improvement and survival prolongation by effective treatment.
- Molecular-targeted therapy against epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) mutations and anaplastic lymphoma kinase (ALK) re-arrangements attain tumor response rates of around 70%.
- Immunotherapy for lung cancer alone, or in combination with conventional treatments, may also improve outcomes for patients fighting lung cancer.
- Environmental causes of lung cancer, such as radon and asbestos, can be monitored and reduced. Countries must not be allowed to export asbestos to poorer countries.
- Other known modifiable risk factors, such as biomass fuels, diesel exhausts and air pollution must also be addressed.
- Better screening, early diagnosis and identifying molecular targets for effective and cost-effective modern treatment should improve lung cancer outcomes.
- Globally, efforts to reduce inequity of care and access to effective and affordable treatments are also vital for addressing the lung cancer crises around the world.

About FIRS

[The Forum of International Respiratory Societies](#) (FIRS) is an organisation comprised of the world's leading international respiratory societies working together to improve lung health globally: [American College of](#)





[Chest Physicians \(CHEST\)](#), [American Thoracic Society \(ATS\)](#), [Asian Pacific Society of Respirology \(APSR\)](#), [Asociación Latino Americana De Tórax \(ALAT\)](#), [European Respiratory Society \(ERS\)](#), [International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases \(The Union\)](#), [Pan African Thoracic Society \(PATS\)](#), [Global Initiative for Asthma \(GINA\)](#), and the [Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease \(GOLD\)](#).

The goal of FIRS is to unify and enhance efforts to improve lung health through the combined work of its more than 70,000 members globally.

