

Foreword

This third all-Ireland cancer statistics report is a welcome addition to the series, which have been produced jointly by the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry and National Cancer Registry over the past ten years. As a result of this collaboration, supported by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), we are developing greater understandings of the patterns and causation of cancer, which will help to shape research and service delivery priorities that can benefit the people of the whole Island of Ireland. This is but one example of the value that is being derived from the unique partnership that is the All-Ireland NCI Consortium.

The detailed information on treatment and survival is particularly opportune and welcome. The development of the National Cancer Control Programme and the Northern Ireland Cancer Network (NICaN) will require detailed information on all elements of cancer patient care and outcomes. While the information is valuable in itself, comparative data from the two health services adds an additional dimension not available from within either jurisdiction. Detailed comparison of the performance of the two health services in prevention, early detection, treatment and aftercare helps put our achievements and future challenges into clearer perspective.

The report clearly shows that, despite different models of funding and provision, the similarities in cancer patterns between Ireland and Northern Ireland greatly outweigh the differences. This provides us with unique research opportunities to combine the data from the two registries to build on existing work to gain further insights into cancer aetiology, health services research and health economics.

Dr Tony Holohan
Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health and Children

I welcome this important report and wish to congratulate the registries on this collaboration, and the authors on a high quality report. Information is vital for the planning and evaluation of services and by comparing and contrasting how the health services North and South manage models of prevention through to treatment and care, we can record our achievements and plot out our future challenges.

Cancer is an important disease that causes a quarter of all deaths, and whilst the demonstrable improvements in survival are welcome, there is still much more to achieve and we can learn from each other in this respect. As outlined in our Cancer Control Plan we must ensure that we do everything we can to ensure that those whose lives are touched by cancer have access to skilled and appropriate treatment delivered promptly and with humanity. We must also ensure that we act as far as possible to prevent avoidable cancers, including those caused by smoking and other lifestyle issues.

The volume of data produced in the report is significant. Indeed the excellent summary is supplemented by a 350-page analysis of the main cancer sites. We must take note of the recommendations and the implications these will have in how we direct our collective services and research capital to combat ever more effectively the human suffering caused by cancer in its various manifestations.

I look forward to future reports and collaboration.

Dr Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety Northern Ireland