

11. Stomach cancer

Risks and interventions

- Changes in diet—less salt, more fruit and vegetables—can prevent stomach cancer.
- Control of *Helicobacter pylori* infections may prevent stomach cancers, but studies are not definitive.
- Smoking increases risk.
- Few treatment options exist.

Stomach cancer ranks sixth among the major cancers in both new cases diagnosed and fifth in cancer-related death. Each year, more than 700 people are diagnosed with stomach cancer and about 550 die from it.

Variation by gender

For men stomach cancer ranks fifth in incidence and fourth in cancer death. For women it ranks eighth in incidence and sixth in cancer death.

Like many cancers, men tend to be at greater risk. With stomach cancer, the incidence and mortality rates for men are more than twice those for women.

International comparisons

For both men and women, the incidence and mortality rates in Ireland are about the same as in the EU.

However, for both men and women the incidence rates here are about 70% higher than in the US. Moreover, the mortality rates in Ireland are double the US rates.

Stomach cancer survival rates are low everywhere. In Ireland and Europe about 20% of the patients diagnosed live five years or longer. In the US, it is about a quarter. Ireland's survival rates are, however, significantly lower than in either Europe or the US.

table 11.1

stomach incidence and mortality

1998 - 2000 average annual incidence		
all-ireland	cases	age-adjusted rate per 100,000 with 95% ci
male	444	18.5
female	281	8.7
total	725	13.2
european union (1998 only)		
male	20.2	
female	9.5	
total	14.1	
united states (11 seer regions)		
male	11.1	
female	5.4	
total	7.9	
1998 - 2000 average annual mortality		
all-ireland	deaths	age-adjusted rate per 100,000 with 95% ci
male	321	13.3
female	225	6.6
total	546	9.6
european union (1998 only)		
male	15.1	
female	7.3	
total	10.6	
united states (11 seer regions)		
male	6.5	
female	3.4	
total	4.7	

table 11.2

stomach cancer 5-year relative survival (%)

	male		female	
	rate	95% ci	rate	95% ci
ireland	16.8	14.6, 19.0	19.5	16.9, 22.2
europe (eurocare)	20.0	19.2, 20.9	25.4	24.3, 26.6
united states (seer)	22.2	21.0, 23.4	25.4	23.8, 26.9

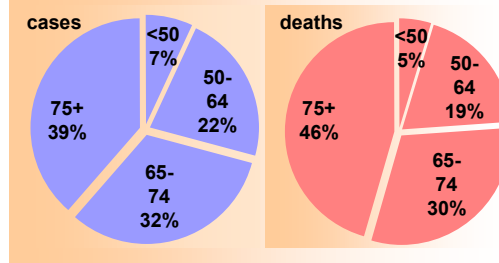
Age distribution

Stomach cancer is generally thought to be a disease of the elderly only. However, nearly 30% of the people diagnosed are under age 65. In fact, half are under age 70.

Among the major cancer sites, stomach cancer ranks fifth in years of life lost.

Almost 25% of the people who die from stomach cancer are under age 65.

figure 11.1
stomach cancer age at diagnosis & death
1998-2000



Time trends

Incidence rates are falling by about 3% per year for men, and by 2% per year for both sexes combined. The rates for women have not changed.

Mortality rates are falling for both men and women. For men they are going down by about 4% per year. For women, the rates are falling by about 3% per year.

figure 11.2
stomach cancer incidence rates by sex and year (1994-2000)

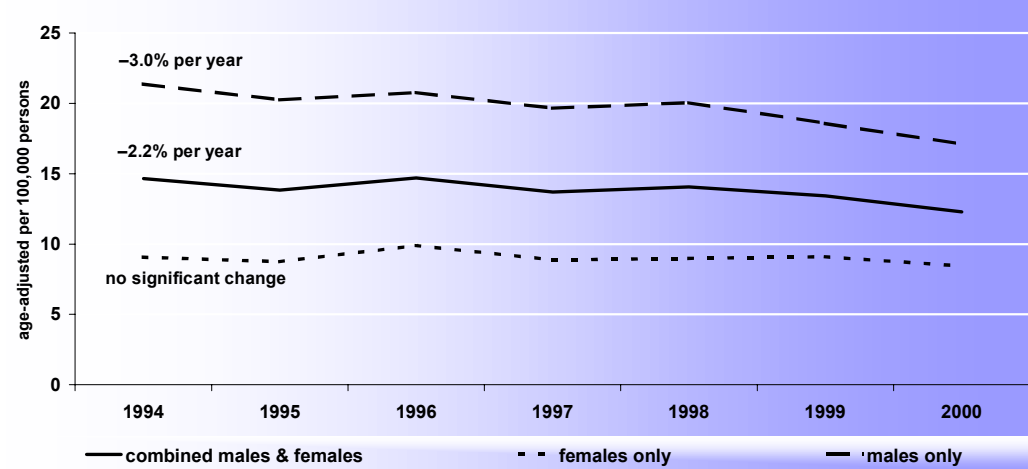
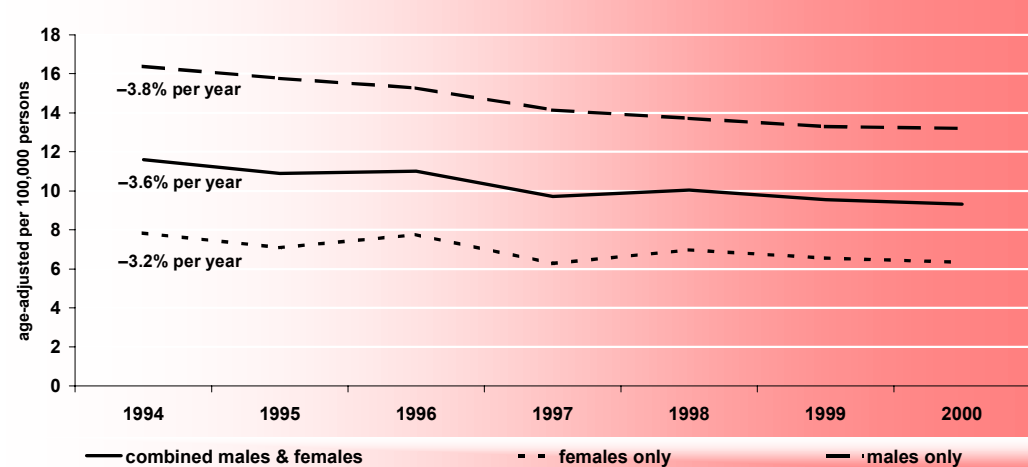
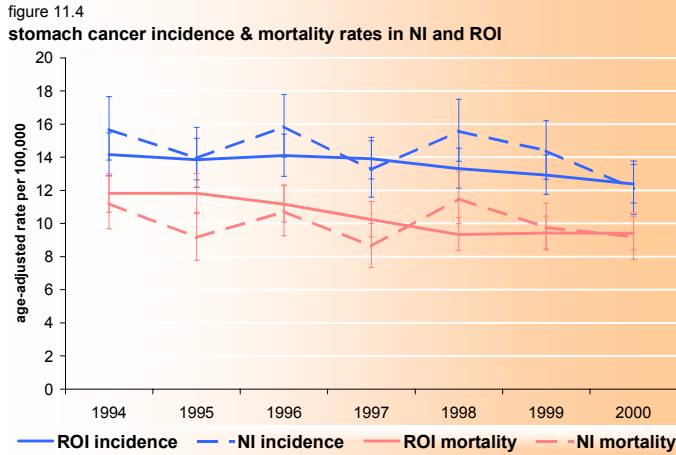


figure 11.3
stomach cancer mortality rates by sex and year (1994-2000)



Geographic variations

For each year between 1994 and 2000, the incidence rates in Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (ROI) have been essentially the same.



The incidence rates in ROI are falling by about 2% per year. The rates in NI have not changed.

The mortality rates in ROI are falling by about 5% per year. The rates in NI have not changed significantly.

Year by year the mortality rates in ROI and NI are essentially the same.

For each county or district council individually, only Dublin and Newry & Mourne have incidence rates that are significantly high. Newry & Mourne also has a significantly high mortality rate, as does Belfast. (See figures 11.7 and 11.8) Previous reports have noted this.

Counties or district councils in the upper quintile for incidence and mortality are generally in the east or inland. Counties or district councils in the lower quintile for incidence and mortality are generally in the south or west. (See figures 11.5 and 11.6)

The spatial scan statistic finds that the northeast region has 17% more cases than expected. A similar region is seen as having 16% more deaths than expected. A large region encompassing most of the southern counties is identified as having 25% fewer cases than expected. A similar but somewhat broader region encompassing the southwest is found to have 20% fewer deaths than expected. (See figures 11.5 and 11.6)

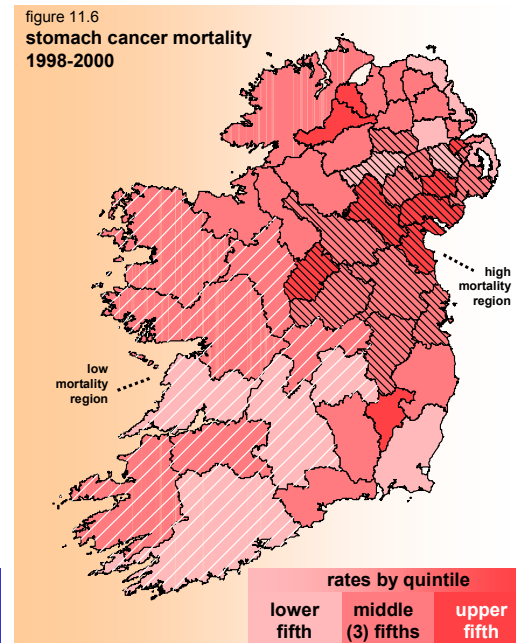
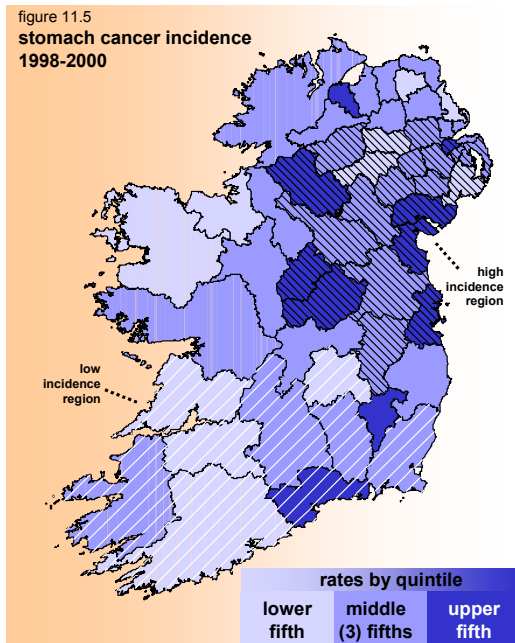


figure 11.7

**1998-2000 age-adjusted incidence rates
stomach cancer by county/district council**

with average annual incidence in ()'s and 95% confidence intervals shown by |—|

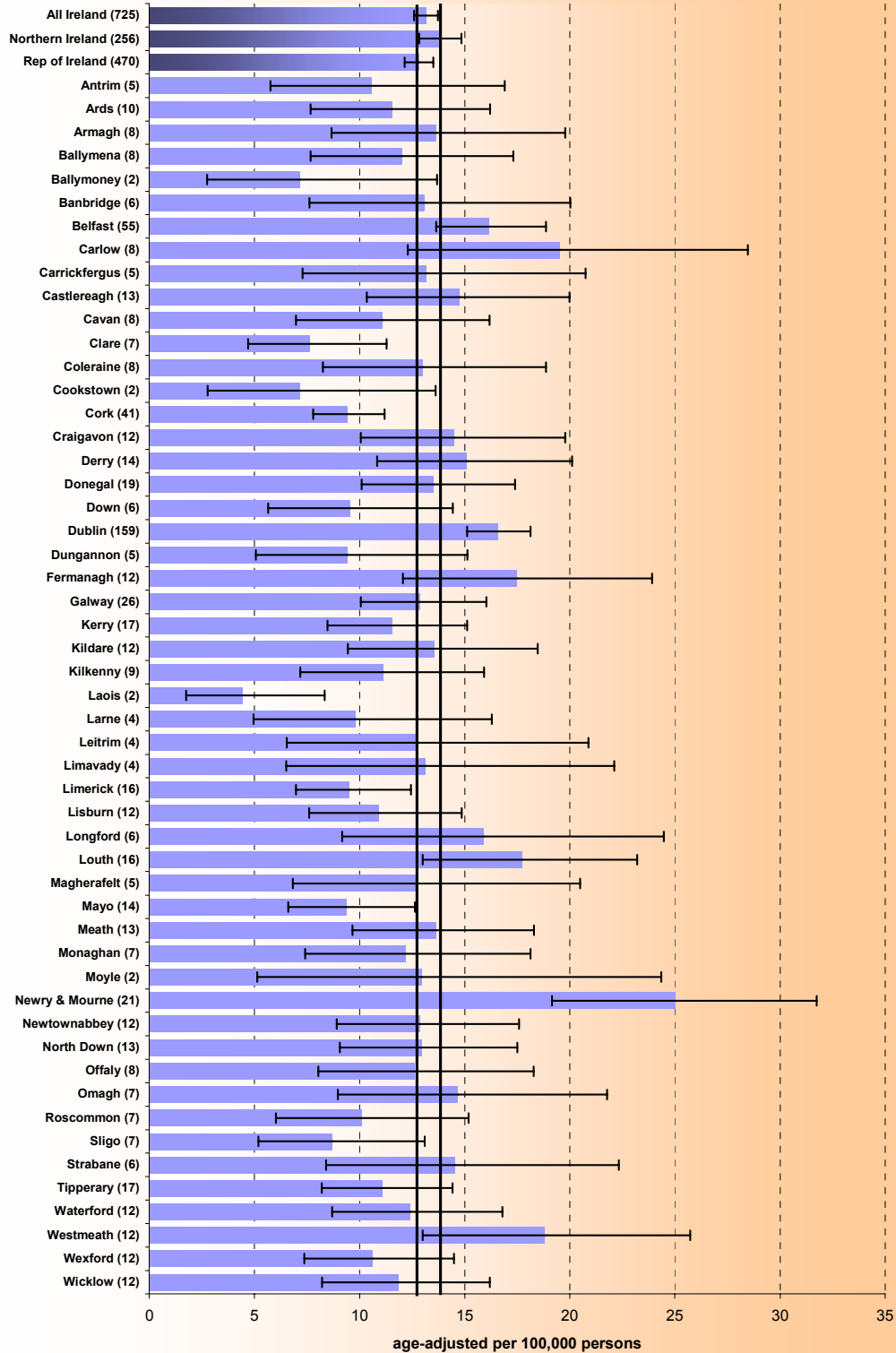


figure 11.8

**1998-2000 age-adjusted mortality rates
stomach cancer by county/district council**

with average annual deaths in ()'s and 95% confidence intervals shown by |—|

