

2. All cancer sites combined

Risks and interventions

- Lifestyle choices especially tobacco use, high-fat/low fruit and vegetable diets, and sporadic and intense sun exposure are known to increase the risk for many of the most common cancers
- Many cancers can be successfully treated, especially if detected early
- Early detection through screening can effectively reduce mortality for some, but not all, cancers

Cancer is a major cause of death in Ireland. More people die from cancer than from heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease, or injuries and poisonings.

Over 19000 new cases of cancer are diagnosed each year, and each year more than 11000 deaths are caused by this disease.

Variation by gender

By and large, the burden of cancer weighs more heavily on men than on women. Specifically, the incidence rate for men is 20% higher than for women. Worse, the mortality rate for men is more than 40% higher.

International comparisons

Nevertheless, for women the incidence and mortality rates in Ireland are significantly higher than in the EU. While for men, they are equivalent to those in the EU.

For both men and women, Ireland's incidence rates are lower than the US.

However, for both men and women, Ireland's mortality rates are higher.

It is difficult to meaningfully compare overall cancer survival rates between countries.

Cancers with a poor survival, such as lung and stomach, may be more common in some countries, leading to poor overall survival. The rates are shown here primarily to allow for future comparisons.

table 2.1

all cancer sites combined incidence and mortality

1998 - 2000 average annual incidence		
all-ireland	cases	age-adjusted rate per 100,000 with 95% ci
male	9707	400.6
female	9647	336.7
total	19354	360.1
europaean union (1998 only)		
male	412.1	
female	289.9	
total	338.8	
united states (11 seer regions)		
male	504.2	
female	391.4	
total	437.6	
1998 - 2000 average annual mortality		
all-ireland	deaths	age-adjusted rate per 100,000 with 95% ci
male	5842	241.0
female	5242	168.1
total	11085	197.9
europaean union (1998 only)		
male	250.1	
female	141.2	
total	186.5	
united states (11 seer regions)		
male	200.6	
female	144.7	
total	167.3	

table 2.2

all cancer sites combined 5-year relative survival (%)

	male		female	
	rate	95% ci	rate	95% ci
ireland	40.5	39.8, 41.1	48.7	48.1, 49.3
europaean (eurocare)	39.8	39.5, 40.1	51.2	50.9, 51.5
united states (seer)	62.3	62.1, 62.6	63.5	63.2, 63.7

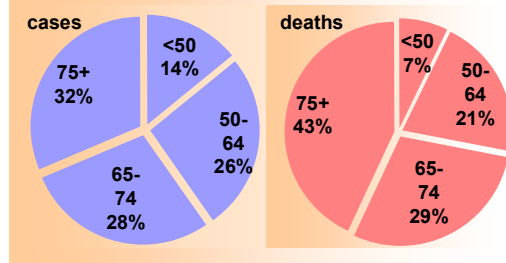
Age distribution

Although cancer is generally thought to be a disease of the elderly, a full 40% of those diagnosed with this disease are under age 65.

In fact, half the people diagnosed with cancer are aged 67 or younger.

Additionally, more than a quarter of those who die from cancer are under age 65.

figure 2.1
all cancers combined age at diagnosis & death
1998-2000



Time trends

The incidence rates have not changed appreciably between 1994 and 2000. For men, and for both sexes combined, the trend is essentially flat. For women, the rate is increasing by less than 1% per year.

Conversely, mortality rates for men, and for both sexes combined, have been decreasing by between 1% and 1.5% per year. For women, however, the trend is essentially flat.

figure 2.2
all cancer sites combined incidence rates by sex and year (1994-2000)

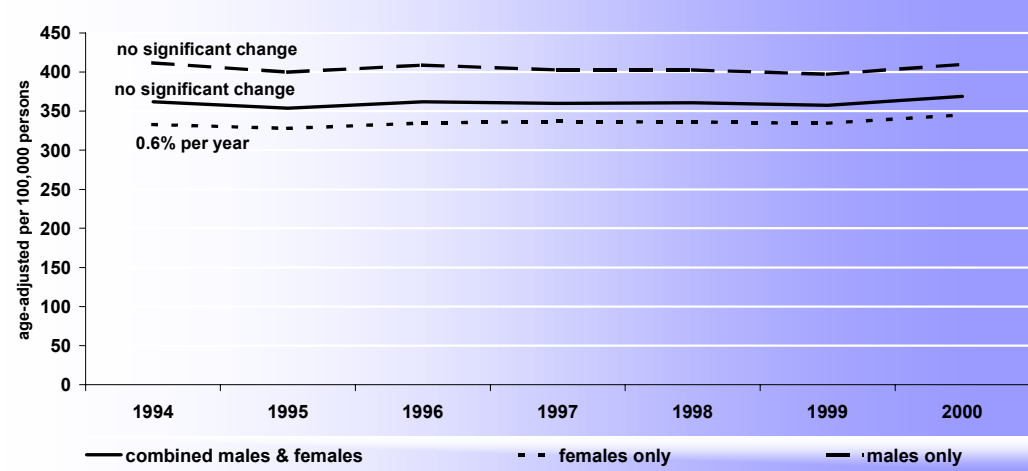
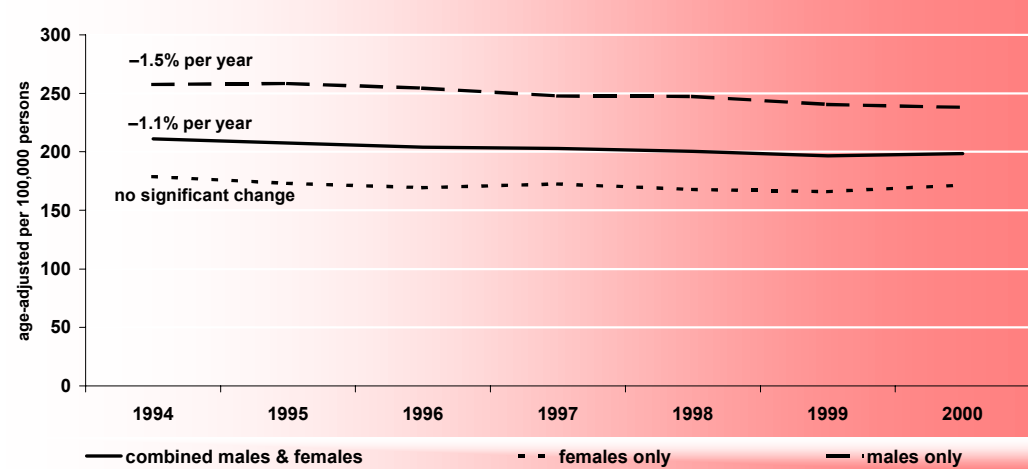
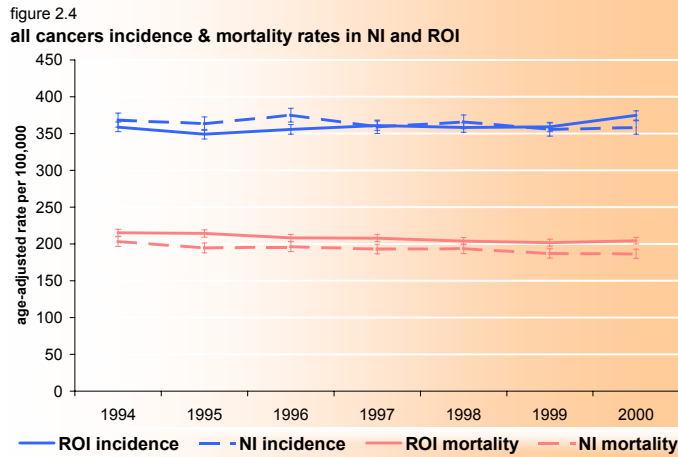


figure 2.3
all cancer sites combined mortality rates by sex and year (1994-2000)



Geographic variations

The incidence rates in Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (ROI) are statistically the same for any given year.



There is not a significant change in the incidence rates in NI or ROI over time.

Mortality rates, however, are declining in both NI and ROI. In NI they are decreasing by 1.3% per year; in ROI, by 1% per year.

In addition, the mortality rates in NI are significantly lower than those in ROI in 1995, 1997, 1999 and 2000.

Compared to the all-Ireland incidence rate, Belfast, Derry, Dublin and Kildare have significantly high rates. Compared to the all-Ireland mortality rate, ROI as a whole, Dublin, Kildare, and Belfast have significantly high rates. Northern Ireland, 12 district councils and Clare have significantly low mortality rates. (See figures 2.7 and 2.8)

Counties or district councils in the upper quintile of incidence rates are generally in central east Ireland. Those in the lower quintile are somewhat spread through the island. Counties or district councils in the upper quintile of mortality rates are also mostly in the central east Ireland. Those in the lower quintile are all in the north. (See figures 2.5 and 2.6)

The spatial scan statistic finds that Belfast and the central east region have 8% to 10% more cases than expected. The northern part of Ireland as a whole has 4% fewer cases than expected. The central east region also has 11% more deaths than expected. The northeastern part has 12% to 16% fewer deaths than expected, while the west region has 8% fewer. (See figure 2.5 and 2.6)

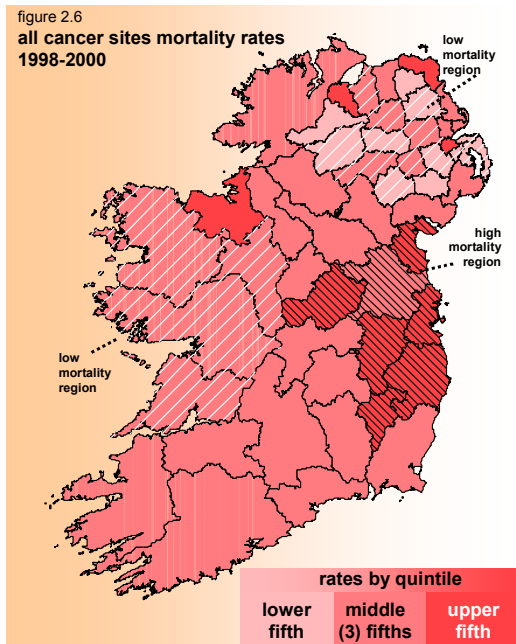
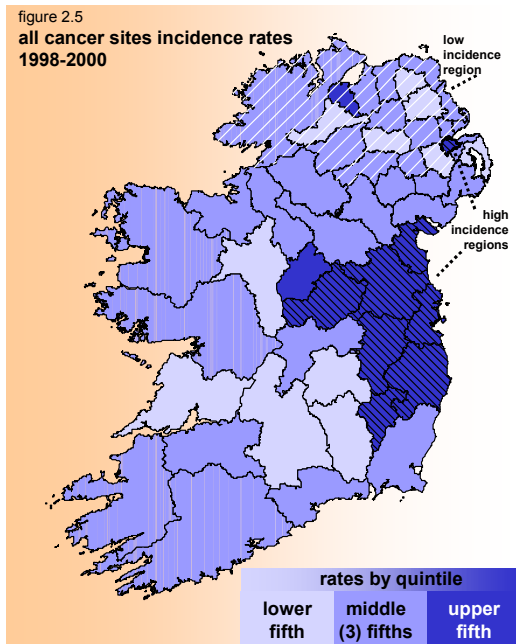


figure 2.7

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

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

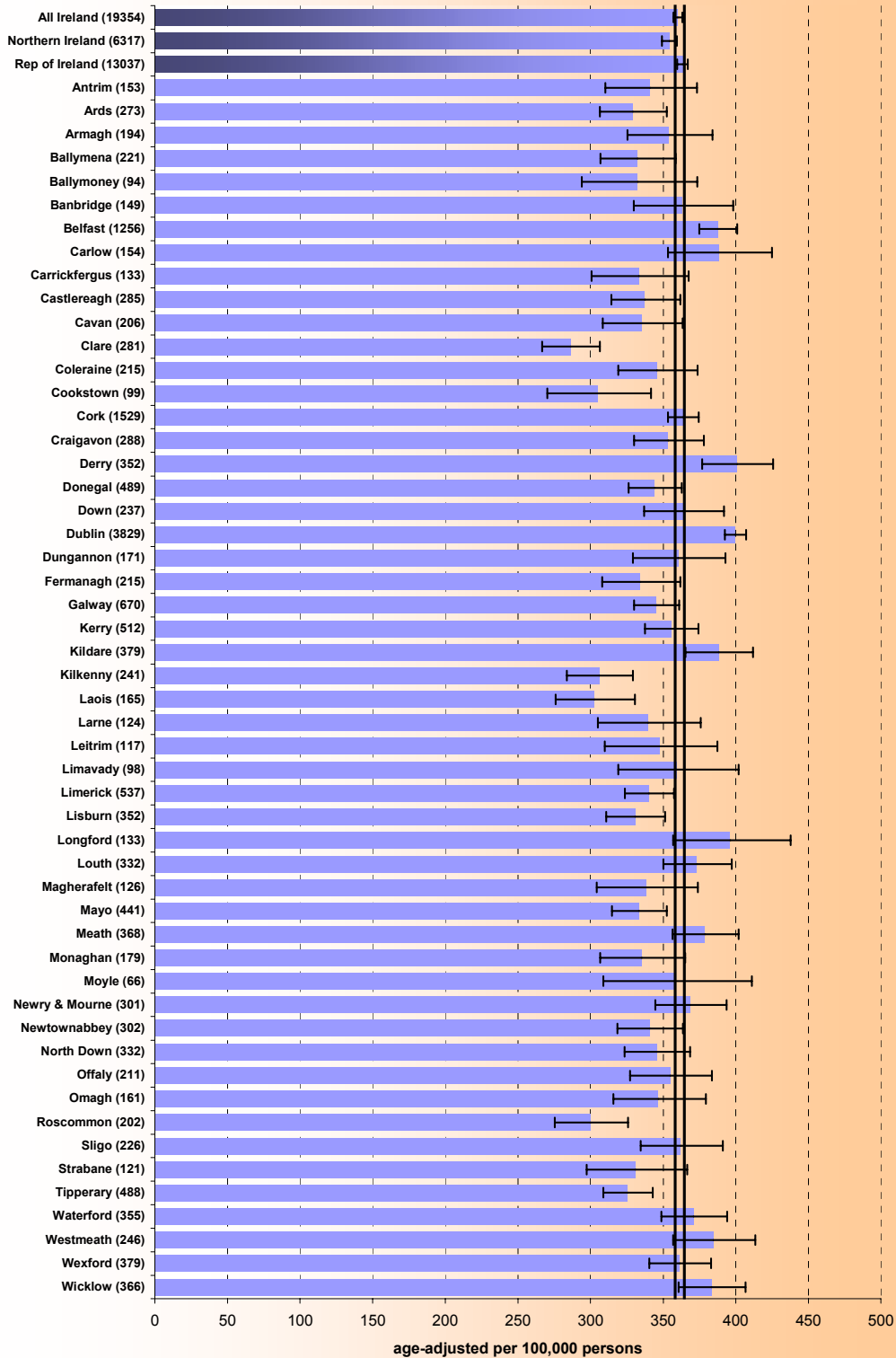


figure 2.8

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

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

