

Lung cancer in women increasing

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Lung cancer in women increased 30 percent between 1973 and 1976 in 11 areas across the nation and most victims died within three years, the National Cancer Institute reported yesterday.

Dr. Marvin Schneiderman, an associate institute director for statistics, said smoking and possibly shifting industrial patterns, with more women working in former male occupations, may be responsible for the increase.

Less common, but also showing a steady increase, were malignant moles in whites — another particularly serious form of cancer. Some specialists believe this may result from changing lifestyles which expose more people, and more skin, to the sun.

The figures covering the 1973-76 period were published in the first report on the institute's new program which monitors 10 percent of the nation's population.

The statistics indicated there was an annual increase of 1 to 2 percent in the rates at which people are developing all kinds of cancer. That is slightly higher than during two previous decades, but Schneiderman said the measurements differed somewhat and cannot be directly compared.

The report said the average annual occurrence rate for all kinds of tumors was 324.4 per 100,000 people for all areas studied except Puerto Rico, where the cancer rate is much lower — 200.7 per 100,000.

The institute said Spanish speaking populations have lower overall cancer rates.

Lung cancer was the main contributor to malignancy increases in the 11 areas surveyed. It was the most common type in men, striking 46.7 of every 100,000 in 1976. The increase was 9 percent annually for white men and 4 percent for blacks.

In white women, lung cancer increased steadily by about 8 percent a year in the 11 areas, to 22.9 cases per 100,000 in 1976. Among black women, the increase was even greater — almost 10 percent annually, to 24.2 cases per 100,000.

The report said preliminary data indicated only 12 percent of lung cancer patients on the average survived for three years after diagnosis.

Breast cancer remained by far the most common malignancy among the women monitored, averaging 81 cases per 100,000 in 1976. Seventy-eight percent of women with breast cancer lived at least three years after diagnosis.

For all 11 areas combined, cancers of the breast, lung, and colon and rectum were the most common of 15 types monitored.

The incidence rate for colon-rectum cancer remained essentially level.

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