

## IARC contributes to *Lancet Oncology* Series highlighting the needs of children and young people with cancer

A new *Lancet Oncology* Series presents the latest results and ideas from some of the world's most eminent cancer experts from 19 countries spanning 6 continents. The Series aims to improve information availability, research, care, and education in the field of paediatric oncology and proposes a broad range of solutions for the next decade.

Despite a global effort to prevent, cure, and control cancer, the specific needs of children and young people have been overlooked. Although 80% of childhood cancers are potentially curable with current treatments, every day about 250 children around the world die from cancer. Estimates suggest that 1 in 1000 adults in high-income countries are survivors of childhood cancer, and 60% of these survivors experience adverse effects of cancer treatment throughout their lives. This poses challenges for drug development, and more needs to be done to address the long-term consequences of cancer treatment.

The Series lends particular emphasis to the issue of childhood cancer in developing countries. A lack of awareness about cancer (especially in young people) and poor availability of basic health care mean that children often already have advanced cancer at the time of diagnosis. Moreover, treatment, where it is available, is often poor or too expensive for patients to afford. For instance, in Africa childhood cancer incidence as a proportion of total cancer incidence is approximately 12 times that in Europe, but 80% of people in Africa have no access to radiotherapy, cancer surgery, or the infrastructure needed to deliver basic cancer care.

IARC contributed to the Series by analysing the burden of cancer in the childhood and adolescent population. Relevant statistics are essential for efficient cancer control. Although data on cancer incidence, mortality, and survival are largely available in high-income countries, they are sparse in middle-income countries and almost non-existent in low-income countries. It is estimated that in Africa reliable data on incidence and survival are provided by cancer registries covering only about 1% of the continent's population. Only three African countries collect mortality data and provide it to the WHO mortality database. In most African countries, population statistics are not available in sufficient detail and within reasonable timelines.

The Series authors conclude by calling on all countries to develop national cancer plans that recognize the unique demographic and care needs of young people with cancer.

[Read \*Lancet Oncology\* Series on Childhood Cancer](#)