

## POTENTIAL YEARS OF LIFE LOST DUE TO CANCER

Potential years of life lost (PYLL) is an estimate of the average number of years of life lost due to premature death. It provides an alternative measure to death rates by taking into account average life expectancy and giving more weight to deaths that occur among younger people.

In 2006, cancer was the leading cause of premature death for both men and women in Canada, representing 32% of the PYLL due to disease as compared to 11 other causes of premature death (Figure W1).

Table W1 illustrates that, in 2006, Canadians lost 1,048,900 potential years as a result of cancer. Lung cancer was responsible for 284,000 PYLL, representing 27% of the premature death caused by cancer. For men in 2006, the three leading cancers were lung, colorectal and prostate, which accounted for 47% of the PYLL due to cancer in men. The three leading cancers for women were lung, breast and colorectal, which accounted for 53% of PYLL due to cancer in women. The ranking of these cancers for men and women with respect to PYLL has been consistent in recent years. For women, however, the PYLL due to lung cancer, which is greater than for breast cancer, reflects the high rates of lung cancer mortality among women aged 50 to 79. Among men, although prostate cancer is more common than lung cancer, the PYLL due to lung cancer is more than four times higher than for prostate cancer, signalling higher mortality rates for lung cancer and the younger age at which men develop and die from this disease.

PYLL is higher for cancers that are more common, have an earlier age of onset and more quickly lead to death. With regard to the most common cancers in women and men, the PYLL from breast cancer (92,400) far exceeds the PYLL from prostate cancer (32,800), reflecting the relatively young age at which women die from breast cancer. However, there has been a decline in PYLL for breast cancer in recent years, signalling the reduction in mortality from this disease. In contrast, the PYLL for Hodgkin lymphoma (3,200) reflects a cancer that is less common and relatively curable.

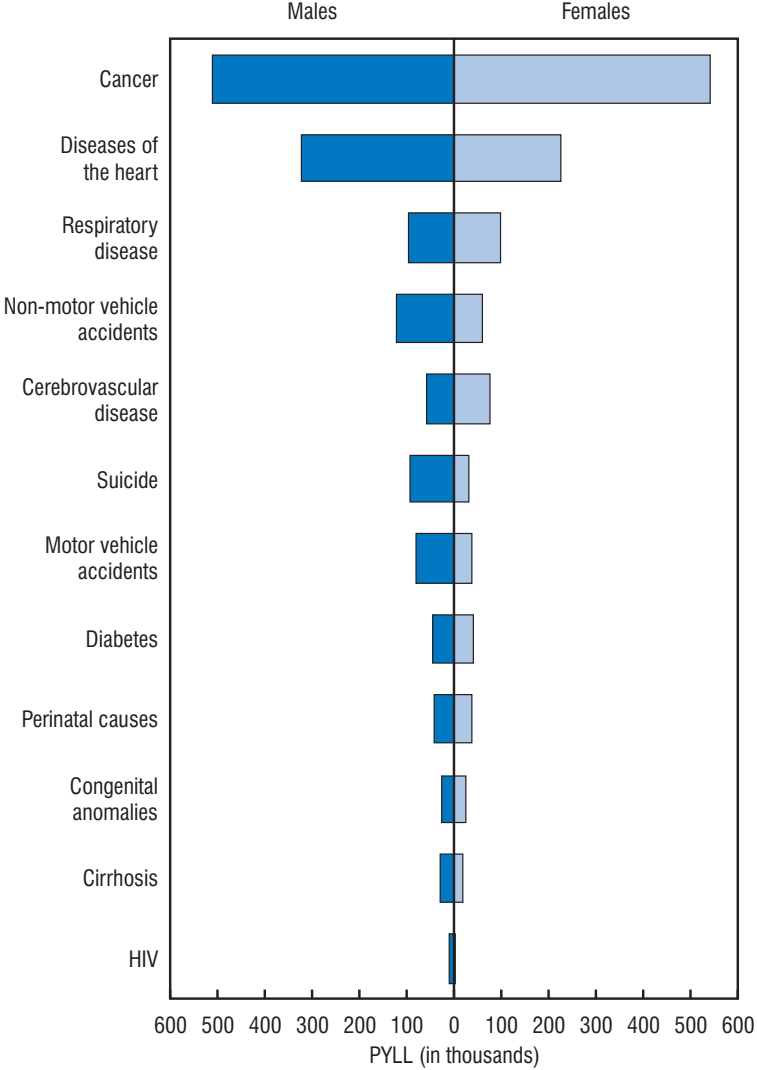
Although the number of men who die from cancer each year exceeds that of women, the PYLL for women (539,400) is slightly higher than that for men (509,500). This is because women generally live longer than men, and some of the deaths due to female cancers occur at younger ages.

More information about cancer statistics is available in the annual publication, [\*Canadian Cancer Statistics\*](#).

***Cancer is the leading cause of premature death in Canada and is responsible for over one million potential years of life lost in Canada.***

Figure W1

Selected Causes of Potential Years of Life Lost (PYLL), Canada, 2006



**Note:** Figures are ranked in order of total PYLL for both males and females combined and are calculated based on life expectancy.

**Analysis by:** Chronic Disease Surveillance and Monitoring Division, CCDPC, Public Health Agency of Canada

**Data source:** Canadian Mortality database at Statistics Canada

**Table W1****Potential Years of Life Lost Due to Cancer, Canada, 2006**

	Potential Years of Life Lost (PYLL)					
	Total		Males		Females	
	Years	%	Years	%	Years	%
<b>ALL CAUSES</b>	3,243,500	—	1,738,300	—	1,505,200	—
<b>All Cancers</b>	1,048,900	100	509,500	100	539,400	100
<b>Cancer</b>						
Lung	284,000	27.1	144,800	28.4	139,200	25.8
Colorectal	116,000	11.1	61,800	12.1	54,200	10.1
Breast	93,000	8.9	700	0.1	92,400	17.1
Pancreas	54,500	5.2	26,500	5.2	28,000	5.2
Brain	39,000	3.7	22,600	4.4	16,400	3.0
Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma	37,900	3.6	20,600	4.1	17,200	3.2
Leukemia	36,600	3.5	20,100	3.9	16,600	3.1
Prostate	32,800	3.1	32,800	6.4	—	—
Stomach	29,700	2.8	18,300	3.6	11,300	2.1
Ovary	29,600	2.8	—	—	29,600	5.5
Esophagus	24,600	2.3	19,100	3.7	5,500	1.0
Kidney	22,100	2.1	13,900	2.7	8,200	1.5
Bladder	19,900	1.9	13,800	2.7	6,100	1.1
Oral	17,100	1.6	11,900	2.3	5,200	1.0
Melanoma	16,500	1.6	10,100	2.0	6,400	1.2
Multiple Myeloma	16,100	1.5	8,100	1.6	8,000	1.5
Liver	12,400	1.2	9,300	1.8	3,100	0.6
Body of Uterus	11,900	1.1	—	—	11,900	2.2
Cervix	9,700	0.9	—	—	9,700	1.8
Larynx	6,400	0.6	5,300	1.0	1,100	0.2
Hodgkin Lymphoma	3,200	0.3	2,000	0.4	1,300	0.2
Thyroid	2,500	0.2	1,000	0.2	1,400	0.3
Testis	1,300	0.1	1,300	0.3	—	—

— Not applicable

**Note:** Figures are ranked in order of total PYLL for both sexes combined and are calculated based on life expectancy. Sums and percentages for specific cancers will not add to the "All Cancers" total due to the exclusion of other cancers.

**Analysis by:** Chronic Disease Surveillance and Monitoring Division, CCDPC, Public Health Agency of Canada

**Data source:** Canadian Cancer Registry database at Statistics Canada