醫院管理局
HOSPITAL AUTHORITY

Overview of Hong Kong Cancer Statistics of 2021

1. Background

1.1 Hong Kong Cancer Registry (HKCaR) is a population-based cancer registry responsible for collecting the basic demographic data, information of the cancer site, and tumour histology of patients diagnosed with cancer in public and private medical institutions in Hong Kong. Robust cancer registry data provide the basis for governments to prioritise resources in cancer control according to the burden of various cancers in the communities, for health care planners and researchers in developing healthcare policies to improve the quality of cancer care, prioritising costly cancer treatments, and implementing cost-effective cancer prevention strategies such as cancer screening programmes and other public health interventions.

1.2 This report provides an overview of cancer incidence and mortality for 2021, along with staging and survival statistics of prevalent cancers, for cancer surveillance. This year, we focus on stage-specific survival of lung cancer and report, for the first time, stage data on liver cancer. The published reports of survival for common cancers included those issued in previous years on the breast, colorectal, gynaecological (cervical, corpus uteri and ovarian & peritoneal), nasopharyngeal, prostate and thyroid cancers are available on the website of the HKCaR.

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2. New cancer cases

2.1 In 2021, there were 38,462 new cases diagnosed with cancer in Hong Kong. This included 18,943 males and 19,519 females. On average, 105 people were diagnosed with cancer every day.

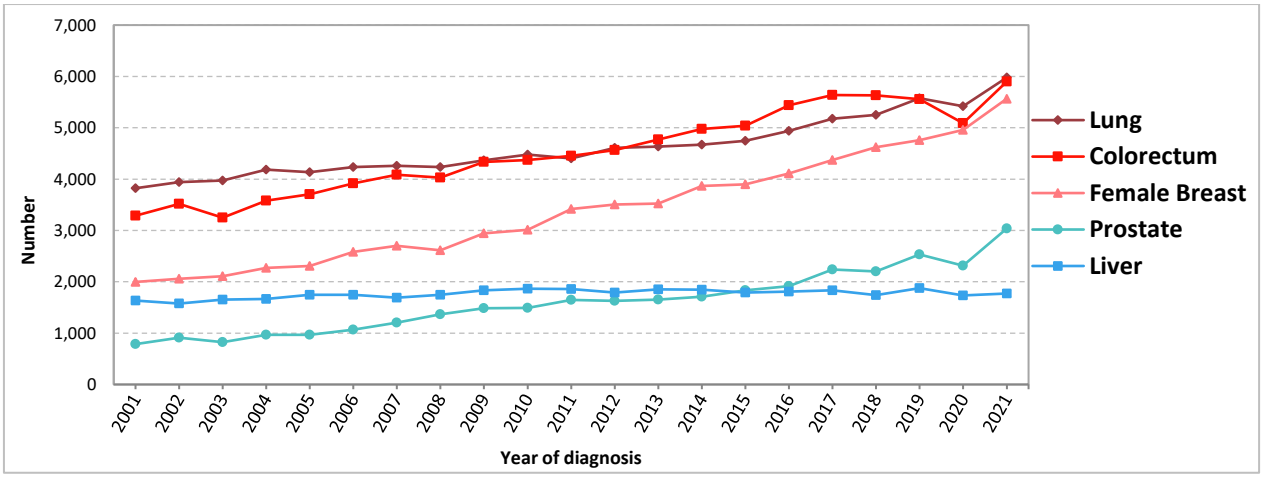
2.2 The number of new cancer cases had been increasing for years until a decline of 3.7% occurred in 2020 after accounting for the change in reporting practice. However, that number has increased by 12.5% (or 4,283 cases) in 2021 which was higher than that in 2020.

2.3 The number of new cancer cases among men in 2021 increased by 13.4% (or 2,240 cases) and that among females increased by 11.7% (or 2,043 cases) from 2020. The crude annual incidence rates of cancer per 100,000 population were 560 for males and 484 for females in 2021.

2.4 More women are diagnosed with cancer than men in two consecutive years, with women outnumbering men with a ratio of 103 to 100 in 2021 (compared with 93 to 100 in 2011).

2.5 The most frequent cancers diagnosed in 2021 were cancers of the lung (15.5%), colorectum (15.3%), breast (14.5%), prostate (7.9%) and liver (4.6%). These five leading cancers comprised nearly 58% of all new cancers in Hong Kong (**Figure 1**). Compared with the preceding year, there is little movement in the top ten cancer ranking, with just pancreatic cancer moving to the 10th place.

Figure 1. Number of new cases of 5 most common cancers, 2001-2021



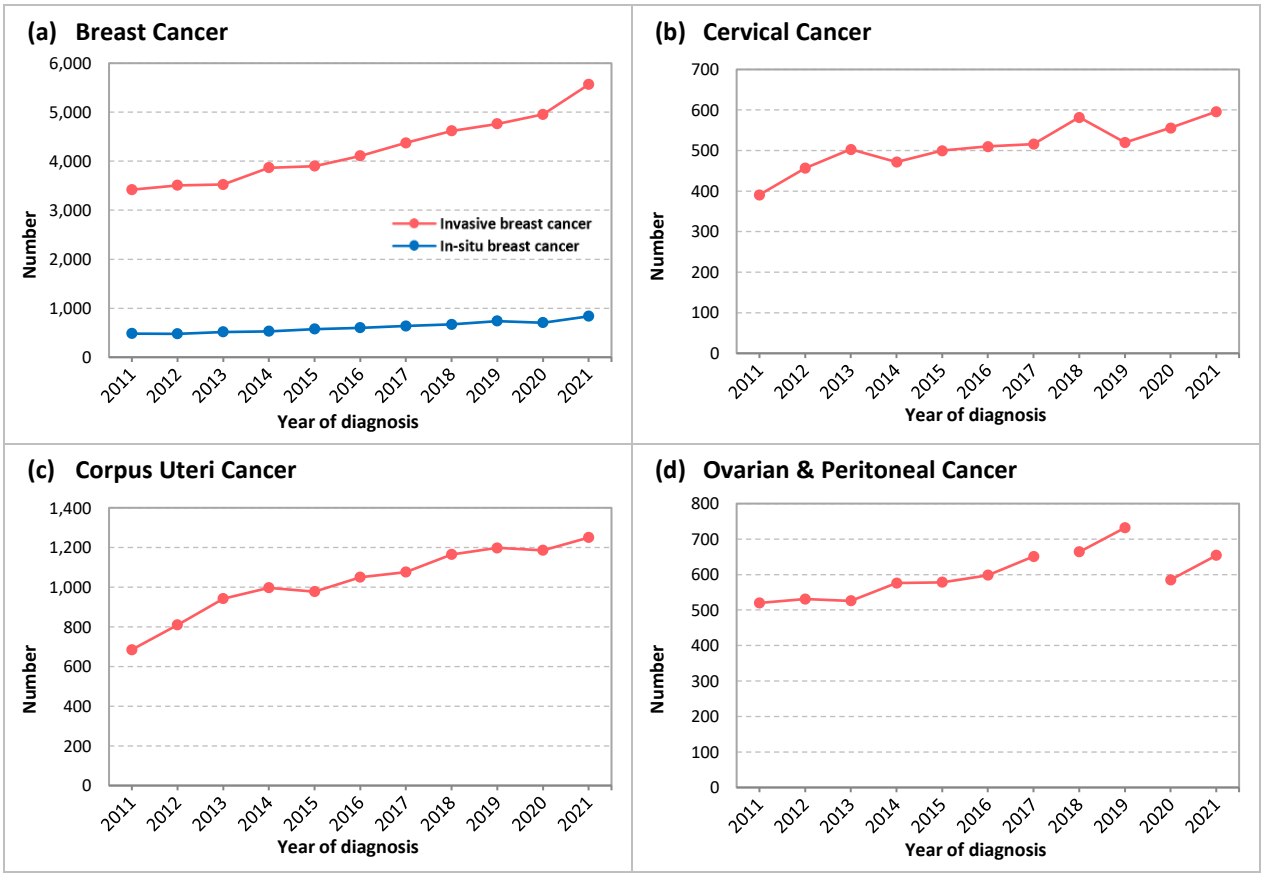
2.6 For men, the top five cancers comprised about 64% of new cancer cases. They were cancers of the lung (18.4%), colorectum (18.1%), prostate (16.0%), liver (7.1%) and stomach (4.0%).

2.7 For women, the five leading cancers were cancers of the breast (28.5%), lung (12.7%), colorectum (12.7%), corpus uteri (6.4%) and thyroid (4.7%), accounting for about 65% of female cancers.

2.8 The number of newly diagnosed invasive breast cancer cases in women increased by 12.3% to 5,565 in 2021 (**Figure 2**). There were a further 835 new cases of in-situ breast cancer (or known as stage 0 breast cancer) reported during the year. Since 2011, the number of invasive female breast cancer has increased by 62.8%, significantly higher than the overall increase of 50.4% for all female cancers combined.

2.9 Among gynaecological cancers (**Figure 2**), the number of women newly diagnosed with cervical cancer went up to 596 cases (or increased by 7.2%) in 2021, while the number diagnosed with cancer of the corpus uteri increased by 5.4%, when compared to 2020. There was also an increase of 11.8% in the numbers of ovarian & peritoneal cancer in 2021.

Figure 2. Number of new cases of female breast and gynecological cancers, 2011-2021



- Starting from 2018, "Ovarian etc." has been replaced by "Ovarian & Peritoneal Cancer (OPC)" in cancer reporting and from 2020 onwards, borderline ovarian tumour (BOT) is no longer reportable. Thus, comparisons against prior years should be made with caution.

2.10 Despite being the 10th most commonly diagnosed cancer, pancreatic cancer is the 4th leading cause of cancer deaths in Hong Kong. Compared to 2020, there was an increase of 18.5% in the number of new cases diagnosed, up to a total number of 1,116 in 2021. The number of newly diagnosed pancreatic cancer cases has more than doubled since 2011.

2.11 Over the past decade, new cancer cases have jumped up by over 42% or at an annual rate of 3.6%. During the same period, the overall population grew slowly at an annual rate of 0.5%, but the population aged 65 and older increased at 4.4% per year.

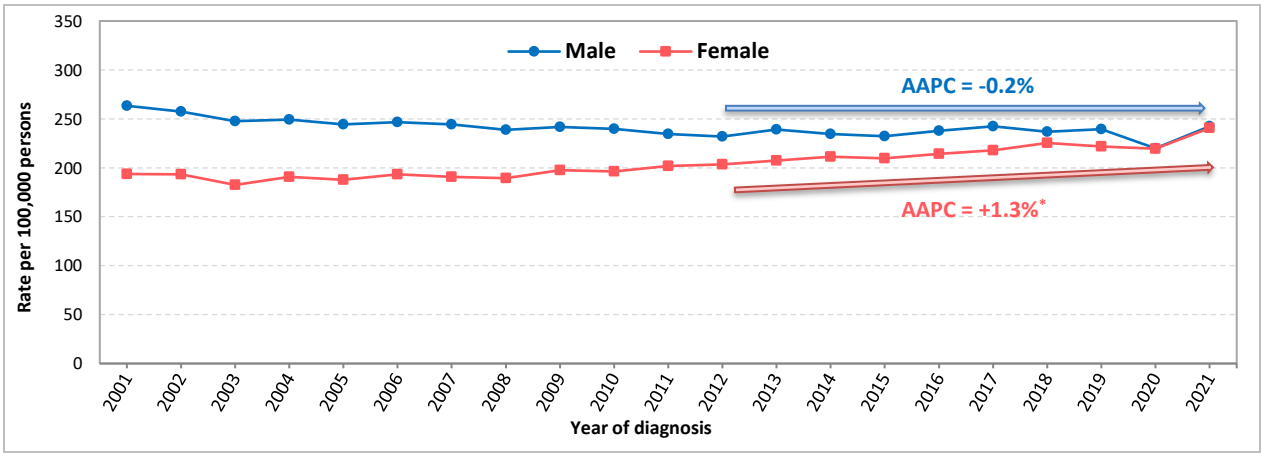
2.12 The type and order of the five leading cancers have remained more or less the same over the decade (**Table 1**). The largest increases in the number of new cases were in prostate and breast cancers, which rose nearly 85% and 63%, respectively. The number of new cases of liver cancer dropped slightly by 4.7%.

Table 1. Leading new cancers (both genders combined)

	2011		2021		
Cancer site	**Number**	**Rank**	**Number**	**Rank**	***Overall change***
Lung	4,401	2	5,978	1	*+35.8%*
Colorectum	4,450	1	5,899	2	*+32.6%*
Breast	3,440	3	5,592	3	*+62.6%*
Prostate	1,644	5	3,038	4	*+84.8%*
Liver	1,858	4	1,771	5	*-4.7%*
All cancers sites	**26,998**	**-**	**38,462**	**-**	***+42.5%***

2.13 Over the years, the increase in the overall number of new cancer cases in Hong Kong is largely driven by the population ageing, along with changes in cancer risks as well as the improvements in diagnostic practices. After adjusting for the effect of change in population composition, the age-standardised incidence rate of all cancers for males was stable but for female the rate had an increasing trend in the last decade (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3. Age-standardised incidence rates of all cancers, 2001-2021



- Rates are standardised to the Segi's world standard population (Segi, 1960).
- Average Annual Percent Change (AAPC) is used to summarise the trends over the past decade (2012-2021).

* Statistically significant change in trend (p<0.05)

2.14 The ten cancers with the largest number of new cases diagnosed by gender in 2021 are displayed in **Appendix I**.

3. Cancer deaths registered

3.1 For many years, cancer has been the number one killer in Hong Kong. In 2021, there were 15,108 registered deaths due to cancer, accounting for 29.3% of the total deaths. Over half (58%) of the cancer deaths were in men. The crude annual mortality rates of cancer per 100,000 population were 259 for males and 158 for females.

3.2 The cancers causing most deaths were lung cancer (26.7%), followed by colorectal cancer (15.2%) and liver cancer (9.6%), which accounted for over half of all cancer deaths. Pancreatic cancer (5.9%) and breast cancer (5.3%) ranked 4th and 5th respectively.

3.3 The cancers causing most deaths in males were lung cancer (30.0%), colorectal cancer (15.1%) and liver cancer (11.9%), accounting for about 57% of cancer deaths. For females, lung cancer (22.3%), colorectal cancer (15.3%) and breast cancer (12.4%), accounted for half of all cancer deaths.

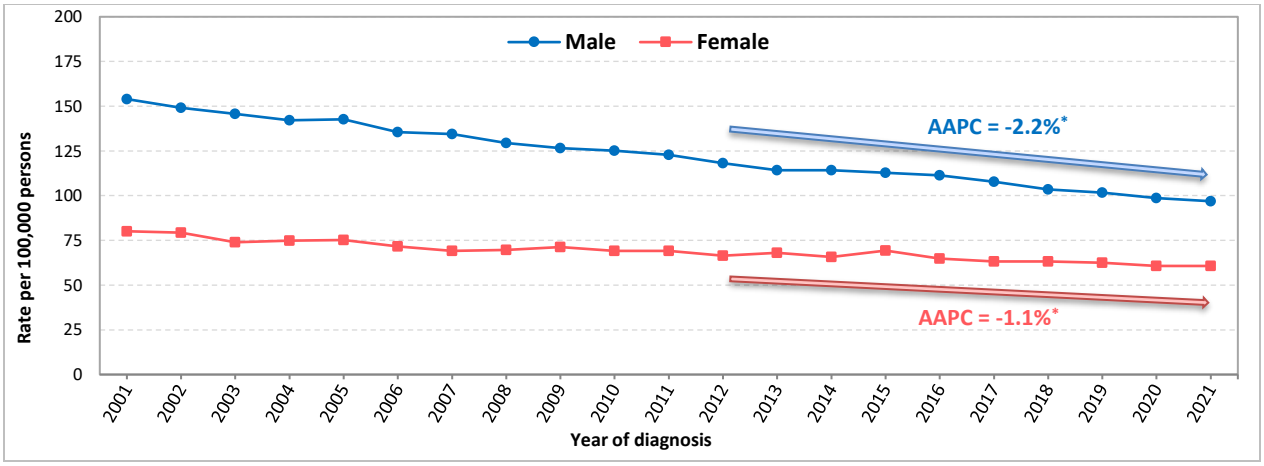
3.4 Over the past decade, the number of cancer deaths has risen at an annual rate of 1.3%. The ranking of the top three death-leading cancers remained unchanged (**Table 2**). There were marked increases in the number of deaths from pancreatic cancer (+75.0%), breast cancer (+43.5%) and colorectal cancer (+20.7%). The increase was much less pronounced in lung cancer (+6.5%) and there was a slight drop in the numbers of death due to liver cancer (-5.8%) between 2011 and 2021.

Table 2. Leading cancer deaths (both genders combined)

	2011		2021		
Cancer site	**Number**	**Rank**	**Number**	**Rank**	***Overall change***
Lung	3,789	1	4,037	1	*+6.5%*
Colorectum	1,904	2	2,298	2	*+20.7%*
Liver	1,536	3	1,447	3	*-5.8%*
Pancreas	508	6	889	4	*+75.0%*
Breast	554	5	795	5	*+43.5%*
All cancers sites	**13,241**	**-**	**15,108**	**-**	***+14.1%***

3.5 The number of cancer deaths is increasing due to population growth and ageing. However, after adjusting for demographic changes, the age-standardised mortality rates from cancer have fallen, with a significant decrease of 2.2% per year for men and 1.1% for women in the recent decade. This indicates our cancer care delivery system is making progress against cancer (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4. Age-standardised mortality rates of all cancers, 2001-2021



- Rates are standardised to the Segi's world standard population (Segi, 1960).
- Average Annual Percent Change (AAPC) is used to summarise the trends over the past decade (2012-2021).

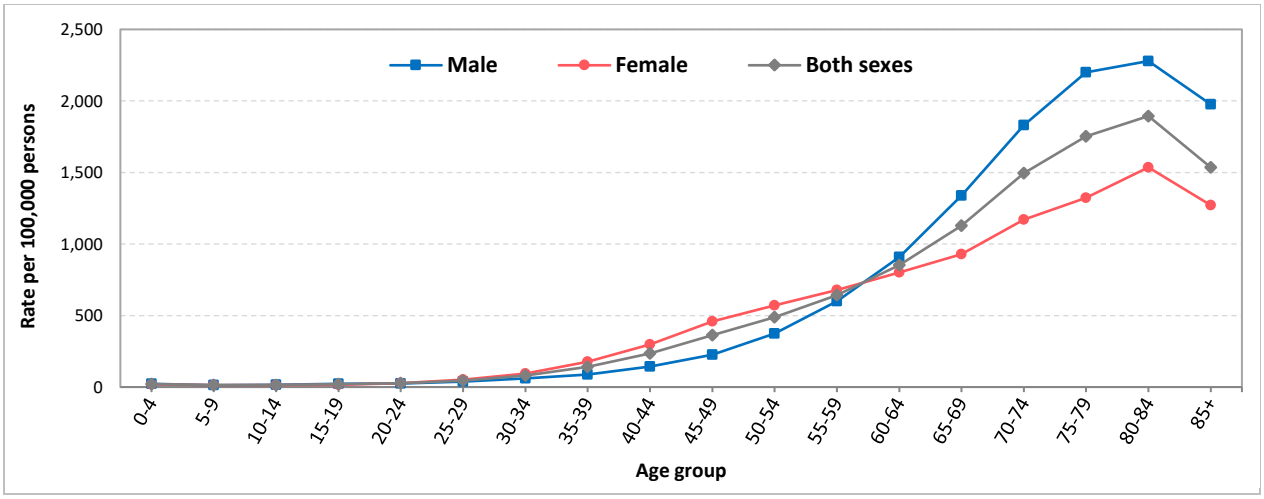
* Statistically significant change in trend ($p<0.05$)

3.6 The ten cancers with the largest number of cancer deaths by gender in 2021 are displayed in **Appendix I**.

4. Cancer and age

4.1 Advancing age is the most important risk factor for most cancer types. In 2021, the incidence rates for cancer overall rose from less than 50 cases per 100,000 people in the age groups under 30 years to about 360 per 100,000 among those aged 45–49, and further increased to over 1,100 per 100,000 people in the age groups 65 years and older (**Figure 5**).

Figure 5. Incidence rate by age group in 2021



4.2 The median age at diagnosis was 66 years (male: 69 years; female: 63 years). This means that half of the cancer cases occurred in people below this age and half in people above this age. Only a mere 0.5% of cancer cases being diagnosed in children and adolescents under 20 years of age.

4.3 In 2021, there were 178 newly diagnosed cancer cases in children and adolescents aged under 20 years, with 98 cases in males and 80 cases in females. The most common cancers were leukaemia (32.6%), brain & spinal tumours (11.2%) and lymphoma (11.2%). These top three cancers constituted about 55% of all cancer cases in this age group.

4.4 Women are more prone to have cancer than men among adults aged 20-64, mainly due to the relatively high incidence rates of gender-specific cancers of the breast, cervix, corpus uteri and ovary & peritoneum. The age-specific female preponderance was most apparent in the age groups 20-44 years, in which the number of cancer cases in women was 1.7 times higher than that in men.

4.5 Over half (55%) of new cancer cases and 72% of deaths due to cancers occur in people aged 65 years or over. As long as the current demographic trends continue, a notable increase in the burden of cancer among the elderly is expected in the coming decades

4.6 A person's risk of developing or dying from cancer is age-dependent. Based on the statistics in 2021,

- about 1 in 4 men and 1 in 4 women will develop cancer by the age of 75 years;
- about 1 in 10 men and 1 in 16 women will die from cancer by the age of 75 years.

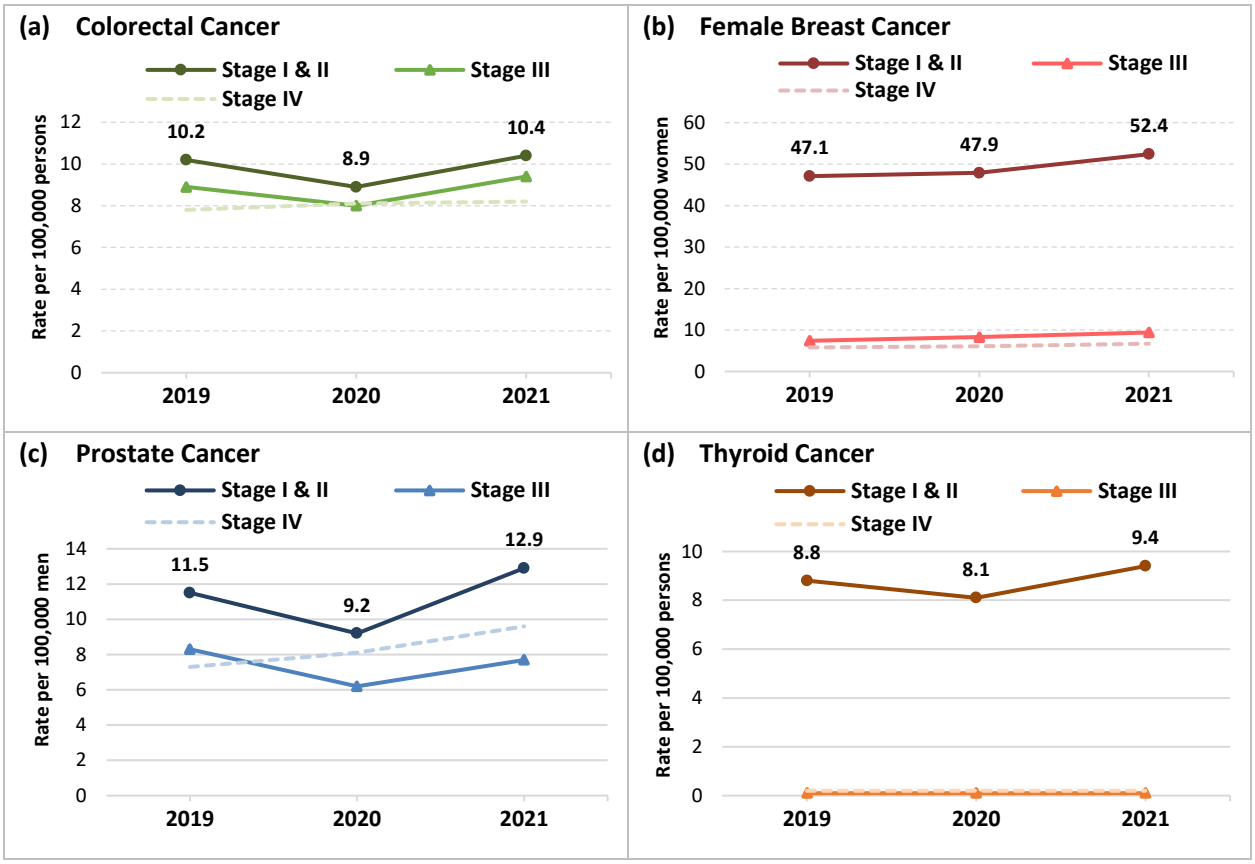
4.7 The relative frequency of the five most common cancers by gender and age groups in 2021 is shown in **Appendix II**.

5. Impact of COVID-19 on cancer diagnoses

5.1 When interpreting the data for the years 2020 and 2021, the potential impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on people's health-seeking behaviour and related healthcare services should be considered. The overall number of newly diagnosed cancer cases in Hong Kong in 2020 was 3.7% lower than that in 2019 after accounting for the change in reporting practices. With the relatively ease of local anti-epidemic measures in 2021, the number of newly diagnosed cancer cases climbed by 4,283 cases (or 12.5%) to edge near 38,500.

5.2 As healthcare activities had broadly resumed in 2021, there was a surge in demand for medical consultations and diagnostic services, leading to the increase in the number of cancer diagnoses. For most cancers, the numbers have even surpassed the pre-epidemic levels. Compared to 2020, it is worth noting the larger increases were seen in people diagnosed with cancers that can be detected early in stage I or II, such as female breast cancer, colorectal cancer, thyroid cancer and prostate cancer (**Figure 6**).

Figure 6. Age-standardised rates of common cancers by stage at diagnosis, 2019-2021



- Rates are age-adjusted to the World Standard population (Segi 1960).

5.3 The impact of the epidemic on cancer diagnoses and outcomes at the population level might become more pronounced as more data becomes available. The HKCaR will continue to provide robust surveillance to monitor and detect changes in cancer incidence, mortality, survival, and trends in the population.

6. Provision of indicators for cancer disease surveillance

6.1 Stage at diagnosis is an important prognostic factor for people diagnosed with cancer. As such, the HKCaR has enhanced the collection and compilation of staging and clinicopathological information on more prevalent cancers and improved the comprehensiveness of the data by providing staging information, survival rates and specific clinicopathological data at a population level.

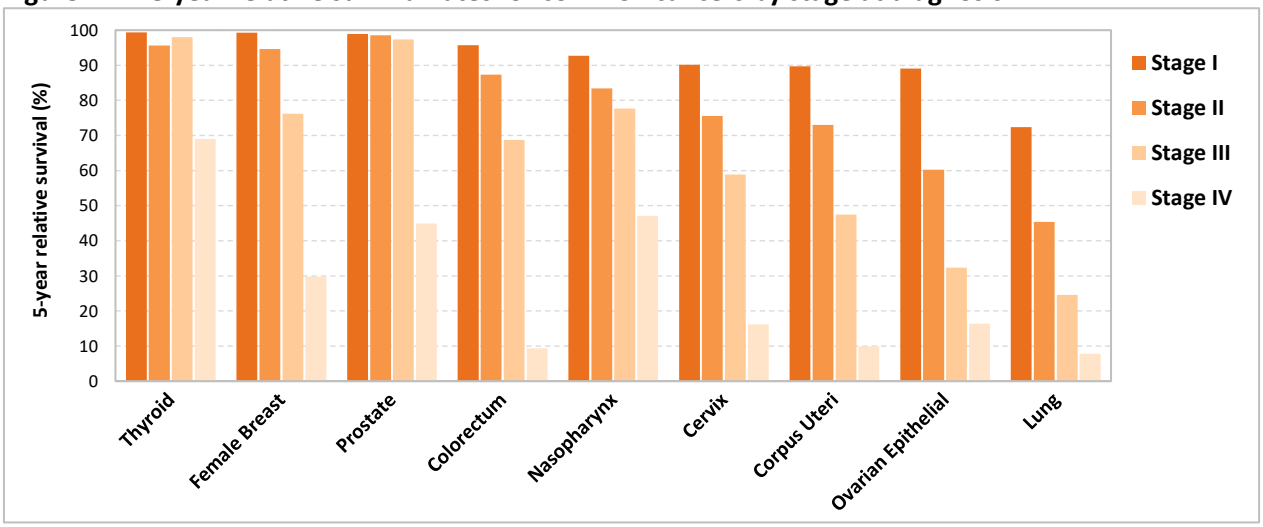
6.2 This year, the HKCaR has carried out another large-scale population-based study of stage-specific cancer survival, covering about 54,400 patients diagnosed with lung cancer during 2010-2020, to provide indicators for cancer control surveillance in the local population. Since 2019, the HKCaR has published overall and stage-specific survival data for nine types of prevalent cancer: breast, colorectum, nasopharynx, cervix, corpus uteri, ovary, thyroid, prostate and lung cancers, which cover nearly two-third of all cancer cases (**Table 3** and **Figure 7**).

Table 3. Overall one- and five-year relative survival rates for common cancers

Cancer site	Period of diagnosis	Number of patients*	Relative survival rate 1-year	5-year
Lung	2010-2020	54,400	54.0%	21.8%
Thyroid	2010-2019	7,630	95.7%	91.5%
Prostate	2010-2019	18,330	96.7%	84.0%
Nasopharynx	2010-2018	7,300	89.3%	68.7%
Cervix	2010-2018	4,120	87.3%	65.8%
Corpus Uteri	2010-2018	7,870	87.9%	70.4%
Ovarian Epithelial	2010-2018	3,710	78.3%	44.5%
Colorectum	2010-2017	37,790	81.4%	58.2%
Female Breast	2010-2017	28,470	96.1%	84.0%

* Numbers are rounded to the nearest ten.

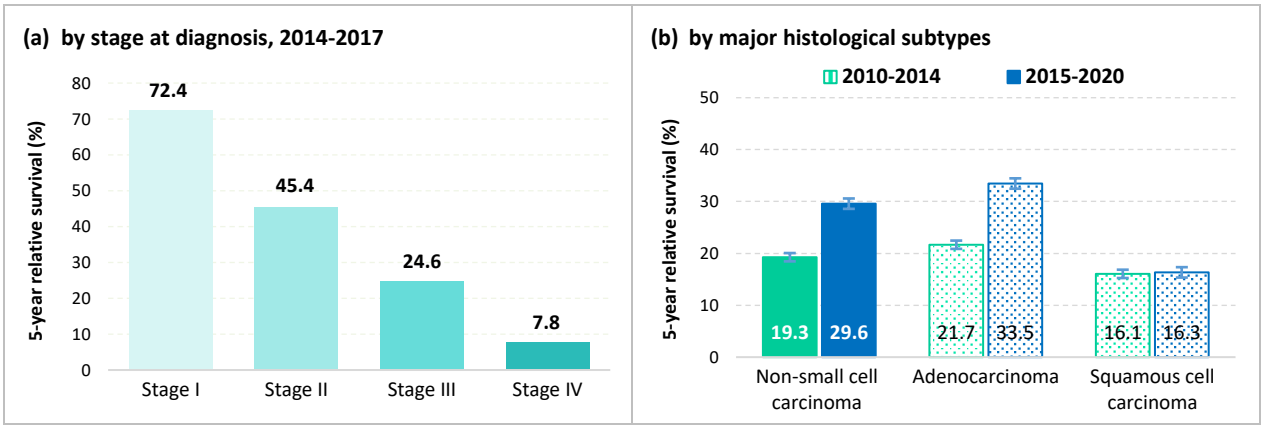
Figure 7. Five-year relative survival rates for common cancers by stage at diagnosis



- The term "Ovarian epithelial" includes fallopian tubes and primary peritoneal cancers.

6.3 For lung cancer, the overall 5-year relative survival rate in Hong Kong was 21.8%. The survival was higher among women than men in all age groups, with an overall 5-year survival rate of 17.2% among men and 29.7% among women. For lung cancer patients at stage I, II, III and IV, the 5-year survival rates were 72.4%, 45.4%, 24.6% and 7.8%, respectively (**Figure 8**). Although the overall prognosis for patients with lung cancer is relatively poor, the 5-year relative survival rate in patients with non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) has significantly improved from 19.3% in 2010-2014 to nearly 30% in 2015-2020, predominantly in adenocarcinoma subtype. Recent advances in targeted therapy and immunotherapy for NSCLC patients are likely responsible for the improvement in survival.

Figure 8. Five-year relative survival rates for Lung cancer



6.4 Beginning with cases diagnosed in 2021, the HKCaR has started to compile and report staging information of hepatocellular cell carcinoma (HCC), which is the most common form of primary liver cancer, with a view to providing important information for disease surveillance and control. As no single staging system has been universally accepted for liver cancer, the current staging is primarily based on the 8th edition of the American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) staging manual to classify study data into early- or advanced-stage to get an appropriate measure of disease extent in our population. Among 1,487 patients with HCC recorded in 2021, about half (49.4%) were early stage, 43.0% were advanced stage and 7.7% were unstaged.

Key points at-a-glance

- In 2021, there were 38,462 new cases of cancer diagnosed in Hong Kong (19,519 females and 18,943 males), with an average of 105 new diagnoses every day.
- Females surpassed males in new cancer diagnoses for the consecutive year, with a ratio of 103 women for every 100 men. This ratio was 93 women for every 100 men in 2011.
- The five most common cancers were lung, colorectum, breast, prostate and liver, together accounting for 58% of all new cancers.
- Lung cancer remained the most common cancer in men with 3,493 new diagnoses (18.4% of all cancers in men). Breast cancer was still the leading cancer in women with 5,565 new diagnoses (28.5% of all cancers in women).
- The number of newly diagnosed cancer increased by 12.5%, compared to 2020. The larger increases were seen in cancers that can be detected early by medical check-ups, such as female breast, colorectal, thyroid and prostate cancers. These may be largely attributed to the change in people's health-seeking behaviour and demand for healthcare services along with the relatively ease of local anti-epidemic measures during 2021.
- After adjusting for the influence of age, the trends of overall cancer incidence seem to be stable in men but an increasing trend was observed in women over the past decade. The risks of dying from cancer in both sexes have continued to decline.
- For lung cancer, the overall 5-year relative survival was 21.8%. The rates were 72.4% at stage I, 45.4% at stage II and 24.6% at stage III. The rate further declined to 7.8% at stage IV. Despite the relatively low 5-year survival rate of lung cancer, the rate in patients with NSCLC has increased substantially from 19.3% in 2010-2014 to nearly 30% in 2015-2020. Recent advances in targeted therapy and immunotherapy for NSCLC patients are likely responsible for the improvement in survival.
- In recent years, the HKCaR has published the stage-specific survival for nine types of prevalent cancers. Robust cancer survival data show, as expected, that for most cancers the 5-year survival is much higher if the cancer is detected early than at later stages. It highlights the importance of enhancing early cancer detection and encouraging individuals to seek medical attention for concerning symptoms.

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Appendix I. Leading Cancer Sites in 2021

10 Most Common Cancers					
Male					
Rank	**Site**	**No. of new cases**	**Relative frequency**	**Crude incidence rate***	**Median age (yr)**
1	Lung	3,493	18.4%	103.3	70
2	Colorectum	3,427	18.1%	101.3	68
3	Prostate	3,038	16.0%	89.8	71
4	Liver	1,343	7.1%	39.7	67
5	Stomach	762	4.0%	22.5	71
6	Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	631	3.3%	18.7	68
7	Kidney & other urinary organs except bladder	586	3.1%	17.3	65
8	Pancreas	582	3.1%	17.2	69
9	Nasopharynx	558	2.9%	16.5	58
10	Non-melanoma skin	545	2.9%	16.1	70
	All sites	**18,943**	**100%**	**560.1**	**69**
Female					
Rank	**Site**	**No. of new cases**	**Relative frequency**	**Crude incidence rate***	**Median age (yr)**
1	Breast	5,565	28.5%	138.1	58
2	Lung	2,485	12.7%	61.7	68
3	Colorectum	2,472	12.7%	61.3	68
4	Corpus uteri	1,250	6.4%	31.0	57
5	Thyroid	919	4.7%	22.8	51
6	Ovary & Peritoneum	654	3.4%	16.2	55
7	Cervix	596	3.1%	14.8	56.5
8	Non-melanoma skin	549	2.8%	13.6	74
9	Stomach	544	2.8%	13.5	70
10	Pancreas	534	2.7%	13.2	71
	All sites	**19,519**	**100%**	**484.2**	**63**
Both sexes					
Rank	**Site**	**No. of new cases**	**Relative frequency**	**Crude incidence rate***	**Median age (yr)**
1	Lung	5,978	15.5%	80.6	69
2	Colorectum	5,899	15.3%	79.6	68
3	Breast	5,592	14.5%	75.4	58
4	Prostate	3,038	7.9%	89.8	71
5	Liver	1,771	4.6%	23.9	68
6	Stomach	1,306	3.4%	17.6	71
7	Corpus uteri	1,250	3.2%	31.0	57
8	Thyroid	1,140	3.0%	15.4	52
9	Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	1,124	2.9%	15.2	67
10	Pancreas	1,116	2.9%	15.1	70
	All sites	**38,462**	**100%**	**518.8**	**66**

10 Major Causes of Cancer Deaths					
Male					
Rank	**Site**	**No. of deaths**	**Relative frequency**	**Crude mortality rate***	**Median age (yr)**
1	Lung	2,622	30.0%	77.5	72
2	Colorectum	1,323	15.1%	39.1	73
3	Liver	1,041	11.9%	30.8	69
4	Prostate	518	5.9%	15.3	82
5	Pancreas	467	5.3%	13.8	70
6	Stomach	380	4.3%	11.2	74
7	Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	242	2.8%	7.2	72.5
8	Oesophagus	239	2.7%	7.1	69
9	Leukaemia	210	2.4%	6.2	72
10	Nasopharynx	178	2.0%	5.3	63
	All sites	**8,754**	**100%**	**258.8**	**72**
Female					
Rank	**Site**	**No. of deaths**	**Relative frequency**	**Crude mortality rate***	**Median age (yr)**
1	Lung	1,415	22.3%	35.1	74
2	Colorectum	975	15.3%	24.2	78
3	Breast	791	12.4%	19.6	63
4	Pancreas	422	6.6%	10.5	73
5	Liver	406	6.4%	10.1	78
6	Stomach	251	4.0%	6.2	74
7	Ovary & Peritoneum	236	3.7%	5.9	61
8	Cervix	178	2.8%	4.4	66
9	Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	146	2.3%	3.6	75
10	Leukaemia	139	2.2%	3.4	73
	All sites	**6,354**	**100%**	**157.6**	**73**
Both sexes					
Rank	**Site**	**No. of deaths**	**Relative frequency**	**Crude mortality rate***	**Median age (yr)**
1	Lung	4,037	26.7%	54.5	73
2	Colorectum	2,298	15.2%	31.0	75
3	Liver	1,447	9.6%	19.5	71
4	Pancreas	889	5.9%	12.0	72
5	Breast	795	5.3%	10.7	63
6	Stomach	631	4.2%	8.5	74
7	Prostate	518	3.4%	15.3	82
8	Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	388	2.6%	5.2	73.5
9	Leukaemia	349	2.3%	4.7	73
10	Oesophagus	299	2.0%	4.0	71
	All sites	**15,108**	**100%**	**203.8**	**72**

* All rates are expressed per 100,000 population. Rates for gender-specific sites are per 100,000 male or female population.
The figures on deaths are based on deaths registered under the Births and Deaths Registration Ordinance (Cap. 174, Laws of Hong Kong).

Appendix II. Five Most Common Cancers by Gender and Age Group in 2021

Male			Female		
Age 0-19*			**Age 0-19***		
Site	**No. of cases**	**% of all sites**	**Site**	**No. of cases**	**% of all sites**
Leukaemia	38	38.8%	Leukaemia	20	25.0%
Lymphoma	13	13.3%	Brain & spinal tumours	12	15.0%
Germ-cell & gonadal tumours	11	11.2%	Carcinomas & epithelial neoplasms	12	15.0%
Brain & spinal tumours	8	8.2%	Lymphoma	7	8.8%
Soft tissue sarcoma	8	8.2%	Soft tissue sarcoma	7	8.8%
			Germ-cell & gonadal tumours	7	8.8%
All sites	**98**	**100%**	**All sites**	**80**	**100%**
Age 20-44			**Age 20-44**		
Site	**No. of cases**	**% of all sites**	**Site**	**No. of cases**	**% of all sites**
Nasopharynx	112	14.0%	Breast	759	35.8%
Colorectum	107	13.4%	Thyroid	293	13.8%
Testis	70	8.8%	Corpus uteri	142	6.7%
Thyroid	50	6.3%	Ovary & Peritoneum	131	6.2%
Lung	45	5.6%	Cervix	129	6.1%
All sites	**799**	**100%**	**All sites**	**2,123**	**100%**
Age 45-64			**Age 45-64**		
Site	**No. of cases**	**% of all sites**	**Site**	**No. of cases**	**% of all sites**
Colorectum	1,137	19.3%	Breast	3,009	36.2%
Lung	1,040	17.6%	Lung	856	10.3%
Prostate	631	10.7%	Colorectum	846	10.2%
Liver	513	8.7%	Corpus uteri	777	9.3%
Nasopharynx	307	5.2%	Thyroid	461	5.5%
All sites	**5,897**	**100%**	**All sites**	**8,315**	**100%**
Age 65-74			**Age 65-74**		
Site	**No. of cases**	**% of all sites**	**Site**	**No. of cases**	**% of all sites**
Prostate	1,405	21.5%	Breast	1,140	25.0%
Lung	1,218	18.6%	Lung	726	15.9%
Colorectum	1,164	17.8%	Colorectum	715	15.7%
Liver	456	7.0%	Corpus uteri	247	5.4%
Stomach	276	4.2%	Pancreas	165	3.6%
All sites	**6,538**	**100%**	**All sites**	**4,557**	**100%**
Age 75 and Over			**Age 75 and Over**		
Site	**No. of cases**	**% of all sites**	**Site**	**No. of cases**	**% of all sites**
Lung	1,190	21.2%	Lung	813	18.3%
Colorectum	1,017	18.1%	Colorectum	785	17.7%
Prostate	997	17.8%	Breast	657	14.8%
Liver	340	6.1%	Non-melanoma skin	270	6.1%
Stomach	263	4.7%	Stomach	204	4.6%
All sites	**5,611**	**100%**	**All sites**	**4,444**	**100%**

* The classification of cancers in children and adolescents (0-19 years) is based on the morphology according to the "International Classification for Childhood Cancer, Third edition (IARC 2017).", rather than the site of tumour.

Note on the use of data:

The numbers of new cases and deaths are important parameters to measure the burden of cancer on local healthcare system. One should keep in mind that the figures are subject to random fluctuations from year to year. Experience tells us that a more reliable comment on the trends of incidence and mortality can only be made after observing over a longer period of preferably at least 5 years or more.

Assessment of trends in data for the years 2020 and 2021 should be interpreted with caution due to the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on people's health-seeking behaviour and healthcare activities in the territory.

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For more cancer statistics, including access to the Cancer Statistics Query System (CanSQS), please visit our website: https://www3.ha.org.hk/cancereg