Statistics

This section provides a summary of the incidence, mortality and survival data for children with cancer in Australia.

In this section, data are presented on children aged 0-14 years who are diagnosed with cancer in Australia.

Data on childhood cancer stage at diagnosis can be accessed at Cancer Australia’s National Cancer Control Indicators website.

More data on childhood cancers are also available at the Cancer Council Queensland’s Australian Childhood Cancer Statistics Online website.

How common is children’s cancer?

In 2017, it is estimated that 719 children aged 0-14 years will be newly diagnosed with cancer in Australia (397 boys and 322 girls).

The number of new diagnoses is estimated to be higher in the 0-4 year age group (361 children) than in 5-9 year olds (171 children) and 10-14 year olds (187 children).

Number of children diagnosed with cancer in Australia, 2017 (estimate)

New cases, 2017 (estimate)

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

In 2017, it is estimated that:

• among 0-4 year olds, the average number of children newly diagnosed with cancer will be 23.8 boys for every 100,000 boys, and 20.4 girls for every 100,000 girls

• among 5-9 year olds, the average number of children newly diagnosed with cancer will be 11.9 boys for every 100,000 boys, and 9.6 girls for every 100,000 girls
among 10–14 year olds, the average number of children newly diagnosed with cancer will be 13.2 boys for every 100,000 boys, and 11.8 girls for every 100,000 girls.

Incidence rate of children's cancer by age group 1982-2013

Note: Figure shows annual age-specific incidence rates for boys and girls.

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

In 2013, 670 children aged up to and including 14 years in Australia were diagnosed with cancer. Of these, the most common types of cancer diagnosed were leukaemia (228 children), brain and other central nervous system cancer (102 children), lymphoma (70 children), kidney cancer (36 children) and other soft tissue cancers (30 children).

Mortality from children’s cancer

It is estimated that in 2017, 77 children aged 0-14 years will die from cancer in Australia (39 boys and 37 girls).

Number of deaths from children's cancer in Australia, 2017 (estimate)
In 2017 it is estimated that:

- among 0–4 year olds, an average of 1.7 boys will die from cancer for every 100,000 boys and the same is estimated for girls.

- among 5–9 year olds, an average 1.9 boys will die from cancer for every 100,000 boys and 2.0 for every 100,000 girls.

- among 10–14 year olds, an average of 1.2 boys will die from cancer for every 100,000 boys and the same is estimated for girls.

Mortality rate of children's cancer by age group 1982 - 2014

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

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1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
In 2014, 76 children aged up to and including 14 years died from cancer in Australia. Of these, it is estimated that the leading cause of death from cancer in children in 2017 will be leukaemia followed by brain and other central nervous system cancer.

Survival from children’s cancer

Relative five-year survival data from 2004 to 2013 is 84% for children.

Note: Survival rate based on data for 5-year relative survival between 2004 to 2013.

Source: Australian Paediatric Cancer Registry
Significant improvements in survival were found for the diagnostic groups of leukaemias, lymphomas, neuroblastoma and malignant bone tumours. There has been little or no improvement in survival for several other types of childhood cancer over recent years, particularly hepatic tumours.

Data from 2004-2013 indicate that the relative survival of children with cancer by the end of first year after diagnosis was 93%, which decreased to 84% after 5 years and 82% after 10 years.

Five years after diagnosis, most children with cancer have a similar survival rate to children who have not had cancer. Recent data shows that for children in Australia who have survived for 5 years after a cancer diagnosis, the chance of surviving for a further 5 years is 97%.

References


