

Long-term rises in kidney cancer incidence

Kidney cancer is relatively common, with 1,400 new cases among Ontarians in 2004. Kidney cancer occurs twice as often in males as females.

Increases in incidence occurred in both sexes during the 1980s and the rise was more rapid in women than men. Incidence in males stabilized after 1989 and in females was stable between 1986 and 1997 and then rose again at 2% per year. Similar incidence trends have been reported for both sexes in the U.S., some parts of Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and in some Asian countries.

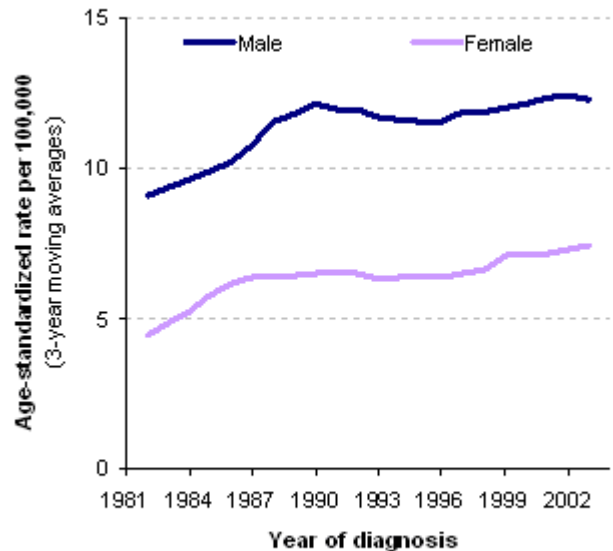
Rising incidence rates of kidney cancer, particularly through the 1980s, were due in part to the introduction of new imaging methods, such as ultrasound and computed tomography, that detect early tumours. The subsequent stabilization in incidence in males and slowing of the rate of increase in females may reflect a common phenomenon when a new method of early diagnosis is introduced: incidence initially rises because pre-existing tumours are diagnosed earlier. Once this pool of tumours has been diagnosed, incidence rates return to their former pattern.

The increasing prevalence of obesity may partly explain the continuing increase in incidence of kidney cancer, particularly evident for females, as being overweight or obese may account for as much as 25% of kidney cancers. Cigarette smoking is the most consistently established risk factor for kidney cancer and is associated with a two-fold increase in risk of this cancer. More recent rises in incidence among females may be related to the continuing impact of smoking. Smoking rates in young women started falling later than in young men and it may be several years before a change in smoking related cancers is detected in women. A decrease in obesity and further reductions in smoking could curb to some degree the increase in kidney cancer incidence.

Recommendations for cancer prevention with respect to weight, food and physical activity are outlined in the recent international report, *Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective*, published by the World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research. http://www.aicr.org/site/PageServer?pagename=res_report_second

Ontario Cancer Facts are produced by the Division of Preventive Oncology.

**New cases of kidney^a cancer,
Ontario, 1981–2004**



^aincluding renal pelvis

Source: Cancer Care Ontario (Ontario Cancer Registry, 2007)