

World Cancer Day is an annual event initiated by the Union for International Cancer Control, in collaboration with WHO, which calls on people, organizations and government agencies around the world to unite in the fight against the global cancer epidemic. This year, the campaign focuses on improving general knowledge around cancer and dispelling misconceptions about the disease.

The rapid rise in the burden of cancer is attributed to drastic changes in lifestyle, including unhealthy diet, smoking, lack of sufficient physical activity, exposure to environmental hazards and other lifestyle-associated risk factors.

Overall, 40% of cancers are potentially preventable, 40% are treatable and 20% suitable for palliation.

There are many proven cost-effective strategies to prevent the burden of cancer.

WHO and partners are working to build the capacity of countries for the early detection and management of cancer, with special emphasis on regional priority areas of cancer prevention and control.

In recognition of the major gap in palliative care in the Region, and the high percentage of cancer patients in advanced stage of the disease, the Regional Office has conducted a series of training sessions for physicians and medical staff connected with palliative care. The training focused on the use of the WHO protocol for integration of palliative care in primary health care in order to expand the services and empower primary health care staff

At present, resources for cancer control in the Region as a whole are not only inadequate but directed almost exclusively to treatment.

With breast cancer is the most common cancer among females in the Region, countries have demonstrated a strong commitment to breast cancer screening and early detection. Training

and raising community awareness for early detection are priority interventions taking place in countries of the Region including Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman and Saudi Arabia. Primary care professionals have a pivotal role to play in raising women's awareness and the early detection of breast abnormalities.

WHO is supporting countries to:

sensitize policy-makers and decision-makers to promote investment and secure the resources required for cancer prevention, early detection, treatment and palliative care

build national capacities for cancer control including training of human resources and development of regional guidelines for cancer registry and palliative care

support the integration of cancer prevention and screening programmes in primary health care through institutional capacity-building in low-income and middle-income countries

develop cancer registries and information systems in countries with limited or no cancer registry programme

promote healthy lifestyles and tobacco control to combat the primary causes of cancer

strengthen palliative care services, including revision of legislation for painkillers

expand home-based palliative care programmes

support the establishment of national and regional networks among programmes and cancer professionals.

Based on the reported data on the prevalence of the two major risk factors (smoking and obesity) for cancer and other noncommunicable diseases, it is apparent that in many countries priority has to be allocated to cancer prevention. Major efforts will be required to reduce the prevalence of the major risk factors to achieve more effective cancer control.

The regional strategy for cancer prevention and control provides a foundation for the development of a comprehensive coordinated national approach to cancer that is resource-oriented.

Related links

[World Cancer Day](#)

[Strategy for cancer prevention and control in the Eastern Mediterranean Region 2009–2013 \[pdf 144Mb\]](#)

[1 in 2 countries unprepared to prevent and manage cancers, says WHO survey](#)

[International Agency for Research on Cancer \(IARC\)](#)

[Union for International Cancer Control \(UICC\)](#)

[Globocan 2008](#)

[Global Initiative for Cancer Registry Development in Low- and Middle-Income Countries](#)

Saturday 17th of May 2025 10:05:09 PM