

More men die from common cancers

Three times more likely than women to face disease

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Health Editor

IRISH men are three times more likely to get certain cancers than women, and more likely to die from the disease, according to a new study.

Men's reluctance to go to the doctor, higher smoking rates, heavier drinking, lack of exercise and poor diet are being blamed for the disparity.

More than 16,000 Irish men are diagnosed with cancer on an annual basis and about 4,700 die from the disease.

The study, commissioned by the Irish Cancer Society, compared the incidence of non-sex-specific cancers – bowel, lung, bladder, skin and stomach cancer – in men and women. It found that men were up to three times more likely to be diagnosed with certain cancers and more likely to die from their disease.

Irish Cancer Society head of services, Donal Buggy, described the findings as 'worrying'.

He said a third of cancers could be linked to behaviour and lifestyle, while only between five and ten per cent were down to genetics.

But he pointed out that men's reluctance to go to the doctor was leading to late diagnosis with lower survival chances. He explained that past studies have shown some men are reluctant to go to a doctor, and that if there is no pain, men are of the belief their symptoms will go away.

The new report was completed by the Centre for Men's Health at the Institute of Technology in Carlow and the National Cancer Registry of Ireland.

In the case of bladder cancer, three times as many men had the disease compared to women and three times as many men were likely to die from the disease.

Centre for Men's Health director Dr Noel Richardson said lifestyle factors like tackling obesity and sedentary lifestyles needed to be addressed to tackle the excess burden of cancer among men.

Dr Richardson said: 'The publication of today's report gives a solid evidence base for what action needs to be taken by both policy-makers and service providers to

engage more effectively with all men, to improve health and well-being and to bring down the incidence of cancer and the number of men dying from cancer.'

The report points out the impor-

'They are reluctant to go to a doctor'

tance of seeking help if symptoms of disease develop. In Ireland, more than nine out of ten people diagnosed with bowel cancer at its earliest stage will live five years after its diagnosis. But less than one in

ten people diagnosed in the latter stage of the disease will survive that long.

Former Operation Transformation contestant Killian Byrne, who lost more than five stone since January 2012, helped to launch the report to encourage other men to take control of their health.

Mr Byrne said: 'Many younger men may take their health for granted. They may not notice that they have become less active or put on weight until their health becomes a concern.'

'Looking after your health is not a sign of weakness but a sign that you are in control.'

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FIVE KILLERS AND THE TOLL THEY TAKE

BLADDER CANCER

A total of 6,992 cases of bladder cancer were diagnosed between 1994 and 2008. About 5,000 of the cases were in men compared to about 2,000 in women. During the same time there were 2,502 deaths from the disease of which 1,676 were men. Men are three times more likely to be diagnosed with bladder cancer and three times more at risk of dying from the disease.

BOWEL CANCER

There were 17,052 men diagnosed with bowel cancer between 1994 and 2008 compared to 12,950 women. During this period there were 14,040 deaths from the disease of which 7,971 were male. Men are 1.6 times more likely to develop bowel cancer and 1.8 times more at risk of dying from it than females.

LUNG CANCER

A total of 25,752 cases of lung cancer were diagnosed between 1994 and 2008. About six out of ten of the cases or 15,935 were in men, compared to four out of ten or 9,817 in women. During the same period there

were 23,211 deaths from the disease and about 63 per cent or 14,623 were in men. Men are 1.6 times more likely to be diagnosed with lung cancer, and 1.8 times more likely to die from the disease.

STOMACH CANCER

Men were twice as likely to be diagnosed with stomach cancer. A total of 7,154 cases of stomach cancer were diagnosed between 1994 and 2008 of which 62 per cent or 4,437 were in men. Men are twice as likely as females to die from stomach cancer across all ages.

SKIN CANCER

While skin cancer rates are higher among women, men are more likely to die from the disease. There were about 7,709 cases of skin cancer between 1994 and 2008 of which 40 per cent or 3,118 were in men. Men were 1.6 times more at risk from dying from this type of cancer than women. Despite having a lower incidence of this cancer, men represented just over half or 51 per cent of the 1,255 deaths from the disease between 1994 and 2008.

