

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Luxembourg, 30 October 2024

Cancer Mortality Rates in Luxembourg Show Promising Declining Trends

A 24-year study analysed Luxembourg's cancer-related deaths and reveals reducing cancer mortality trends

A study by the Luxembourg Institute of Health revealed a significant decrease in cancer mortality, primarily due to advances in early detection and treatment. The research highlights the importance of continued public health initiatives and tailored healthcare services, particularly in addressing challenges such as those posed by an aging population.

Over 24 years, Luxembourg has experienced notable progress in reducing cancer mortality, according to a comprehensive study led by Dr Allini Mafra and Dr Claudine Backes, from the Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention Group of the Department of Precision Health in the Luxembourg Institute of Health (LIH). The research, spanning from 1998 to 2021, analysed nearly 24,000 cancer-related deaths, based on official data from Luxembourg's National Registry of Death Causes, which is managed by the Service épidémiologie et statistique at the Luxembourg Health Directorate. The study provided an in depth analysis of trends of cancer type, sex, and age group, using age-standardized mortality rates (ASR) to track progress.

Key findings show that the overall ASR for all cancers combined has steadily declined by 2.1% per year. Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in Luxembourg, particularly among men, followed by colorectal and prostate cancer. Among women, breast cancer was the most prevalent cause of cancer-related deaths. However, lung cancer has shown an alarming increase among women above 59 years of age.

"We are witnessing tangible progress in cancer control, thanks to the collective efforts of healthcare professionals, patients, research, and national health strategies," said Dr Backes. "While the decrease in cancer mortality is promising, it is crucial to explore innovative approaches in prevention, early detection and treatment, and to implement findings to achieve lasting improvements in the fight against cancer."

"The decrease in cancer mortality rates is encouraging, but we cannot overlook the challenges posed by our aging population," added Dr Mafra. "These factors will require sustained public health efforts and policy interventions to ensure that we continue to reduce cancer mortality in Luxembourg."

The study underscores the importance of early detection and advances in treatment as primary drivers of this improvement, reinforcing the value of continued public health efforts like targeted cancer screening and awareness campaigns. These findings contribute valuable insights for policymakers to strengthen Luxembourg's National Cancer Plan, supporting cancer control measures aimed at reducing the cancer burden in the population.

The full study was published in the international *Journal of Cancer Epidemiology* under the full title: "Cancer mortality trends in Luxembourg: A 24-year descriptive study (1998–2021)" ([doi: 10.1016/j.canep.2024.102648](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.canep.2024.102648)).

Funding and collaborations

The study was funded by Luxembourg's Second National Cancer Plan (Plan National Cancer 2). Access to the data was provided through collaboration with the Luxembourg's National Registry of Death Causes, which is managed by the Service épidémiologie et statistique of the Luxembourg Health Directorate.

About the Luxembourg Institute of Health (LIH)

The Luxembourg Institute of Health (LIH) is a public biomedical research organisation focused on precision health and invested in becoming a leading reference in Europe for the translation of scientific excellence into meaningful benefits for patients.

The LIH places the patient at the heart of all its activities, driven by a collective obligation towards society to use knowledge and technology arising from research on patient derived data to have a direct impact on people's health. Its dedicated teams of multidisciplinary researchers strive for excellence, generating relevant knowledge linked to immune related diseases and cancer.

The institute embraces collaborations, disruptive technology and process innovation as unique opportunities to improve the application of diagnostics and therapeutics with the long-term goal of preventing disease.

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