Carcinogens Stats & Facts



FACTS

1. Millions of U.S. workers are exposed to substances that have been tested as carcinogens in animal studies or found to be possibly carcinogenic in human studies.
2. Based on well-documented associations between occupational exposures and cancer, it has been estimated that 3-6% of all cancers worldwide are caused by exposures to carcinogens in the workplace.
3. Cancers that occur as a result of exposures in the workplace are preventable, if exposures to known or suspected carcinogens can be reduced.
4. Cancer is by far the biggest contributor to those deaths, making up roughly 70% of workplace diseases.
5. More than 200 different known factors, including toxic chemicals and radiation, have been identified to date as known or probable human carcinogens, and workers are exposed to many of these in the course of their jobs.

STATS

- There were an estimated 349 000 deaths and 7.2 million DALYs in 2016 due to exposure to the included occupational carcinogens—3.9% of all cancer deaths and 3.4% of all cancer DALYs;
- 79% of deaths were of males and 88% were of people aged 55 –79 years.
- Lung cancer accounted for 86% of the deaths, mesothelioma for 7.9% and laryngeal cancer for 2.1%.
- Asbestos was responsible for the largest number of deaths due to occupational carcinogens;
- Other important risk factors were second-hand smoke, silica and diesel engine exhaust.
- The highest mortality rates were in high-income regions, largely due to asbestos-related cancers, whereas in other regions cancer deaths from second-hand smoke, silica and diesel engine exhaust were more prominent.

From 1990 to 2016, there was a decrease in the rate for deaths and DALYs due to exposure to occupational carcinogens.