

15 Cancer of the testis

Summary

The peak age group for new cases of cancer of the testis is 30–39 years, much younger than for most other cancers experienced by males. Relative survival is high for cancer of the testis when compared with other cancer sites. During 1992–1997, relative survival one year after diagnosis of cancer of the testis was 97.7% and after five years was 95.4%. Relative survival ten years after diagnosis was 94.5% in 1987–1991, the most recent period for which ten-year relative survival data are available (Figure 15.2; Table 15.2).

Between 1982–1986 and 1992–1997, relative survival after diagnosis of testicular cancer increased significantly. Relative survival one year after diagnosis increased from 95.6% to 97.7%, and five years after diagnosis increased from 91.1% to 95.4% (Figure 15.2; Table 15.2).

Five-year relative survival was 92.8% or above for all age groups under 60 years, with the highest relative survival proportion for males aged 40–49 years, at 97.6%. Five-year relative survival decreased as age increased from age 60, falling to 68.3% for males aged 70–99 years. (Figure 15.3; Table 15.1).

For males aged 40–49 years, five-year relative survival increased between 1982–1986 and 1992–1997, from 90.2% to 97.6% (Figure 15.3; Table 15.3).

Table 15.1: Cancer of the testis: number of new cases and deaths, and five-year relative survival proportions, by age at diagnosis, Australia, 1992–1997

Age	New cases	Deaths	5-year relative survival (%)
0–4 years	33	2	*
5–9 years	6	0	*
10–19 years	116	8	93.2
20–29 years	914	53	94.5
30–39 years	1,197	42	97.2
40–49 years	527	19	97.6
50–59 years	205	20	92.8
60–69 years	77	17	83.6
70–99 years	55	26	68.3
All ages	3,130	187	95.4

* Interpretation difficult due to statistical instability. The instability in this age/sex/site group may be due to the survival model's handling a combination of small number of cases/deaths and or unstable background survival patterns resulting in invalid estimates. These results are therefore not presented here.

Incidence and mortality

Cancer of the testis is a relatively rare cancer. In 1997, there were 564 new cases of cancer of the testis diagnosed. Testicular cancer was the cause of 23 deaths and it is estimated that each year there are about 800 years of life lost before the age of 75 due to cancer of the testis. For the six-year period 1992–1997, age-standardised incidence and mortality rates for cancer of the testis increased, with incidence increasing by 2.0% per annum and mortality by 2.7% per annum.

International comparisons

Five-year relative survival after diagnosis of cancer of the testis in Australia was as high as the best of the other countries for which relative survival data are available. In these countries, five-year relative survival was highest in Australia (95%), the United States and Iceland (Figure 15.3; Table 15.4).

Examination of relative survival by age group for the United States, England and Wales showed similar decreases in relative survival proportions as age increased from 39 years. However, in England and Wales the decreases were not as marked for males aged 40–49 and 50–59 (Ries et al. 1999; Coleman et al. 1999).





