

LUNG CANCER SCREENING SAVES LIVES WHY DON'T MORE CANADIANS HAVE THE CHANCE FOR A CURE?

When lung cancer is detected earlier, people live longer

TORONTO, ON, November 13, 2018 – Despite encouraging progress in treatments for lung cancer—which kills more than 21,000 Canadians each year¹—early detection through screening represents the best hope for improving long-term survival rates.

That's why Lung Cancer Canada is calling on every province and territory to develop a screening program, to ensure that people at risk of the disease are detected much earlier, before the cancer cells spread to other parts of the body.

“Screening saves lives and the positive cascade when a patient is diagnosed early is tremendous. Just think of what this means for the individual, their family, and not to mention the benefit to the health system and society overall,” says Dr Paul Wheatley-Price, President of Lung Cancer Canada. “With so much progress being made in the treatment landscape, by placing our attention on achieving a national screening program for high-risk Canadians, we will really see a dramatic change in outcomes – this is what patients deserve. Lung cancer screening is the way in which we will stop inching forwards in improving lung cancer survival, this will be a giant leap not seen before with this most deadly of diseases.”

Five-year relative survival rates for non–small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) range from 1% to 5% in patients diagnosed at stage IV, compared to 68% to 92% at stage one.¹ In 2018 however, less than 15% of cases are stage 1 at diagnosis. About 50% of lung cancer patients are stage IV at the initial diagnosis, which is already too late. When lung cancer is diagnosed at an early stage, curative treatment is still possible and patients have the greatest opportunity of survival. However, when lung cancer is detected at late stage, after the cancer has already spread to other parts of the body, both the options and opportunity for successful treatment are diminished. At 17%, lung cancer has the lowest five-year survival rate of all the major types of cancer in Canada.

New screening research was presented at the World Conference on Lung Cancer in Toronto this September. The Dutch-Belgium NELSON-trial was a population-based randomized control trial comparing CT screening with no screening in smokers or ex-smokers between the ages of 50 to 74 years. Between 2004 and 2006, the study enrolled 15,822 participants. Analysis at 10 years of follow-up showed a significant 26% reduction in lung cancer mortality in men and up to 61% reduction in mortality in women compared to the no screening group. With two global, large randomized trials demonstrating significant mortality reduction, we have clear evidence to support the life-saving potential of lung cancer screening.

“We call on all levels of government to work together and establish a lung cancer screening programs in every province and territory. The pilot programs, such as the Cancer Care Ontario 3-site program, were good to work out implementation issues, but Canada is now more than ready,” says Dr Stephen Lam MD, FRCPC Chair, Lung Tumor Group & Judah Leon Blackmore Chair, BC Cancer Agency Professor of Medicine University of British Columbia.

Dr Lam notes that in addition to extending patients’ lives, screening programs are also cost effective. When lung cancer is detected early and can be treated with surgery, the cost to the health system is less than treating the disease at a later, non-curative stage.

The *5th Annual Faces of Lung Cancer Report* highlights the remarkable Canadian achievements in the fight against lung cancer. We are now in a new era of lung cancer treatment and Canada continues to lead the charge on so many fronts. However, there is still much to do to increase survivorship. It starts with screening. Canada needs to learn from the provincial pilots and establish the screening plan now, before we lose more Canadian lives that could have been saved. Lung Cancer Canada welcomes collaboration with governments to establish a national screening framework that can save and extend life for those with lung cancer!

For more information on lung cancer or a copy of the report, visit:
www.lungcancercanada.ca.

About Lung Cancer Canada

Based in Toronto, Lung Cancer Canada (LCC) is Canada's only national charitable organization that is focused solely on lung cancer. Lung Cancer Canada serves as Canada's leading resource for lung cancer education, patient support, research, and advocacy. LCC's mission is three fold: 1) to increase public awareness of lung cancer, 2) to support and advocate for lung cancer patients and their families, 3) to provide educational resources to patients, family members, healthcare professionals, and the general public.

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¹ Canadian Cancer Society - <http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-type/lung/statistics/?region=on>