



## **Lung Cancer Canada General Population Key Findings** (web-based survey of 1,600 Canadians age 18 or over)

### **Most Canadians Know Someone Who Has Been Touched by Lung Cancer, Yet Knowledge of Scope, Virulence of Disease Remains Low**

#### **On the One Hand:**

- Most Canadians (51%) have a family member, friend, co-worker or neighbor who has, or had, lung cancer.

#### **On the Other Hand:**

- While lung cancer kills twice as many Canadians than any other cancer, only a little more than one third (34%) of all Canadians know lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in Canada.
- Canadians are more likely to identify breast cancer as the leading killer among women (breast cancer: 60%; lung cancer: 11%) and prostate cancer as the leading killer among men (prostate cancer: 38%; lung cancer: 29%).
- While 1 in 12 Canadians will be diagnosed with lung cancer in their lifetime, 47% of those surveyed put the odds at “1 in 50” or greater and 32% said they had no idea what the odds are.
- One in six Canadians (17%) believe they are more likely to dance on stage with Justin Bieber than they are to ever get lung cancer.
- Canadians either don’t know the five-year survival rate for lung cancer (44%) or significantly overestimate it (actual: 15%, mean guess: 40%).
- Only 34% agree that the average Canadian has a good understanding of the causes of lung cancer, its symptoms, and treatment options.

### **Canadians More Concerned for Family Members than For Themselves; But Many Lack a Good Understanding of Risk Factors, Prevention**

- 54% of Canadians - and 66% of never smokers - say they are not concerned about getting lung cancer or have never really thought about it. Yet, 62% say they are concerned that a loved one will one day develop the disease.
- Only 1% correctly identified radon gas as the second –leading cause of lung cancer -- and only 7% of homeowners say they have ever had their home tested for radon.

- While most lung cancers are diagnosed once the lung cancer has already spread and is most difficult to treat (stage IV), most Canadians' (62%) have no idea what % of diagnoses are at stage IV.
- Just 25% of current smokers say they are very concerned about getting lung cancer. Even among current pack-a-day smokers, just 32% are very concerned.
- 89% of Canadians – including 83% of those who smoke or had smoked -- have never talked to their doctor about their risk for lung cancer.
- 44% of current smokers are unaware that their lung cancer risk remains elevated even after they quit.
- Only one-in-four (27%) Canadians are aware that there is a reliable screening test to detect lung cancer, but when informed that there is, there is widespread support at the conceptual level for a national program for mandatory screening of high risk populations (90% support, including 59% strongly support).

### **While Addictive Nature of Nicotine Is Acknowledged, When It Comes to Lung Cancer a “Blame the Victim” Mentality Pervades**

**While 80% of Canadians believe nicotine is addictive and 68% believe that smoking is a disease like alcoholism:**

- 65% of Canadians say smokers are very responsible for what happens to them as a result of their smoking habit -- a higher response rate than for gamblers, drug addicts, heavy drinkers or unhealthy eaters.
- More than a third (36%) agree with the statement that “it’s hard to feel sorry for people who get lung cancer, because they usually bring it on themselves by using tobacco.”
- Canadians said they have the least amount of sympathy for smokers (35%), followed by people who drink too much (27%) and overeaters (17%) and people who do not exercise (17%).
- The majority of those surveyed (51%), including 59% of current smokers, believe doctors have the least amount of sympathy for patients who smoke, followed by patients who don’t exercise (18%), overeaters (16%) and excessive drinkers (13%).
- The majority of Canadians (58%) acknowledge they would assume someone with lung cancer smoked, and nearly half (46%) would be surprised to learn that many lung cancer patients never smoked cigarettes.

## **Women & Lung Cancer**

- Only 11% of women know lung cancer is the top cancer killer among women (58% think breast cancer is).
- 35% of women agree that they feel more sympathetic towards those with breast cancer than they do towards women with lung cancer.
- Less than a quarter of women (22%) – compared with 31% of men – know that a reliable screening tool for lung cancer exists.
- Though lung cancer diagnoses among female never smokers is on the rise, 53% of women agree that if someone told them they had lung cancer, they would assume they smoked.
- 68% of female smokers were not aware of the health risks when they started smoking.

## **More Hope, Greater Awareness, Education Key in Raising Lung Cancer's Profile**

- Nearly four-in-ten (37%) Canadians feel scientists are more likely to discover Bigfoot during their lifetime than to find a cure for lung cancer.
- Just 2% of Canadians correctly identified November as lung cancer awareness month.
- Only 6% can name a prominent Canadian who has had lung cancer.