
Canadian Cancer Statistics 2020: Update

Thyroid cancer incidence projections for 2019 and 2020 very likely significantly overestimated

Projected estimates of thyroid cancer incidence in Canada for 2019 and 2020 published in the Canadian Cancer Statistics 2019 publication (September, 2019) and in the article "[Projected estimates of cancer in Canada in 2020](#)" (March, 2020), respectively, indicate a continuation of historical increases for thyroid cancer. These projections were based on actual data up to and including the 2015 data year.

Subsequent to these analyses, a scientific paper entitled "[Changing trends in thyroid cancer incidence in Canada: A histologic examination, 1992 to 2016](#)" was published in the journal *Health Reports*. The results of this study, in combination with recent data from 2017 released by Statistics Canada in early 2020 suggest that the 2019 and 2020 projected incidence estimates for thyroid cancer in Canada were likely considerably overestimated. At a time when sex-specific national thyroid cancer incidence rates are stable to declining, current rates would have to increase 13% to 15% per year from 2017 to 2020 in order to reach the published projected rates for 2020.

Reductions in thyroid cancer incidence in recent years reflect, in part, changes in thyroid cancer management guidelines. These revised guidelines, designed to be diagnostically more conservative due to concerns surrounding overtreatment of low-risk thyroid cancer, are likely to further reduce thyroid cancer incidence rates in Canada from 2018 to 2020. It should be noted that these likely overestimations do not extend to thyroid cancer mortality projections.

If you have any questions, email stats@cancer.ca.