

# Cancer Trends in Karachi 1995-2008 and its implications for Pakistan

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**Objective:** To determine the trends of cancer in Karachi South during a thirteen (1995-2007) year period and project its future implications on the health sector of the country.

**Methodology:** Cancer cases recorded at Karachi Cancer Registry during 1st January 1995 to 31st December 2007 were analyzed. Trends were studied by analyzing the age standardized incidence rates (ASRs) in 3 time periods, 1995-7, 1998-2002 and 2003-7.

**Results:** The incidence of cancer registered an approximate 19% increase in males during the first 8 years and a 25% increase in the 13 years of study. In females these figures were 13% and 24% respectively. The most striking increases were observed in cancers of the breast (ASRs 52.8; 69.1; 74.3 per 100,000 population) and oral cavity (ASRs 14.9, 20.4, 25.3 per 100,000 population) in females and tobacco associated malignancies in males (lung ASRs 21.0, 25.2, 26.3 per 100,000 population; oral cavity ASRs 15.6, 22.5, 27.8 per 100,000 population; larynx ASRs 8.8, 10.7, 11.9 per 100,000 population).

**Conclusion:** Pakistan presently has risen from a low to moderate cancer risk region. The cause of concern is the steadily increasing incidence of all cancers, the persisting advanced disease at presentation; insignificant in-situ cancers and no preventive intervention or awareness practices yet in place. With a per capita income of \$2, 410 and total expenditure on health per capita of \$51, the unaffordable cancer management without health cover may pose an unconquerable challenge in the future.