International Agency for Research on Cancer

World Health Organization

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Global projection estimates highlight urgent need for gastric cancer prevention strategies

Lyon, France, 7 July 2025 – A new study from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) projected the future burden of gastric cancer among people born between 2008 and 2017. Assuming no changes in current control measures, the scientists estimate that 15.6 million gastric cancer cases will occur worldwide in this group, of which 76% are attributable to chronic infection with *Helicobacter pylori*, a preventable cause of the disease.

The study, published today in *Nature Medicine*[1], analyses data across 185 countries, combining national age-specific incidence rates from GLOBOCAN 2022 and cohort-specific mortality rates from United Nations demographic projections.

Key results

Asia accounted for two thirds of the projected cases, with 10.6 million cases (68% of the total number of cases), followed by the Americas (2.0 million cases; 13%), Africa (1.7 million cases; 11%), Europe (1.2 million cases; 8%), and Oceania (0.07 million cases; 0.4%).

Among the expected number of gastric cancer cases globally, more than 75% were estimated to be attributable to *H. pylori* infection, including 8 million gastric cancer cases in Asia, 1.5 million cases in the Americas, and 1.4 million cases in Africa. These cases are potentially preventable by *H. pylori* screen-and-treat programmes.

Whereas 58% of future cases of gastric cancer were projected in regions with historically high gastric cancer incidence, 42% were expected in lower-incidence regions, driven largely by demographic changes. In particular, a significant increase in the burden of gastric cancer is projected in sub-Saharan Africa, where the future number of cases will be up to 6 times those estimated for 2022.

Preventing gastric cancer

Gastric cancer is a disease with high morbidity and poor prognosis, although it is largely preventable. Most gastric cancers are attributable to chronic infection with *H. pylori*, and this burden worldwide is one of the highest of any cancer-causing infection. Despite ongoing global initiatives aimed at eliminating cervical cancer

[1] Park JY, Georges D, Alberts CJ, Bray F, Clifford G, Baussano I (2025). Global lifetime estimates of expected and preventable gastric cancers across 185 countries. *Nat Med*. Published online 7 July 2025; https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-025-03793-6

and viral hepatitis, gastric cancer remains relatively neglected, with limited interest and investment in many parts of the world, leading to public health inaction.

“With demographic changes set to increase the gastric cancer burden in many parts of the world, there is an urgent need for coordinated prevention strategies and for regional health systems to be prepared to manage the growing burden,” says Dr Jin Young Park, the leader of the Gastric Cancer Prevention Team at IARC and a co-author of the new study. Gastric cancer is largely preventable, and effective prevention policies could help save millions of lives. “It is essential that health authorities make gastric cancer prevention a priority and accelerate efforts to control it by planning pilot and feasibility projects, including *H. pylori* screen-and-treat programmes,” says Dr Park. Dr Iacopo Baussano, the leader of the Public Health Decision Science Team at IARC and a co-author of the study, says that “shifting the focus of gastric cancer burden projections from the traditional cross-sectional viewpoint towards the expected gastric cancer burden in young cohorts across their life-course can aid policy-makers to design and implement effective and timely prevention programmes.”

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The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is part of the World Health Organization. Its mission is to coordinate and conduct research on the causes of human cancer, the mechanisms of carcinogenesis, and to develop scientific strategies for cancer control. The Agency is involved in both epidemiological and laboratory research and disseminates scientific information through publications, meetings, courses, and fellowships. If you wish your name to be removed from our press release emailing list, please write to terrassev@iarc.who.int.