

# Understanding the burden and characteristics of older people living with and beyond cancer across the UK

Produced by the National Cancer Intelligence Network (NCIN)

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## INTRODUCTION

Around two million people are currently living in the UK with a cancer diagnosis, predicted to increase to four million by 2030(1). As part of the Macmillan-NCIN partnership work programme national patient-level cancer datasets are being used to describe this population including their characteristics and needs. There is little granular information about the cancer survivorship population, yet there are more people surviving cancer and living for longer.

The two million cancer survivors estimate is based on 'Complete Prevalence', which accounts for all people alive ever diagnosed with cancer in the UK. We aim to produce and analyse Complete Prevalence data in the future but, for now, we present **20-year cancer prevalence** data: this accounted for 1.8 million people at the end of the 2010. We have analysed the data for older people to build a greater understanding of the burden and needs of this population.

There were over **1 million** cancer survivors in the UK aged 65 and over that were diagnosed with cancer between 1991-2010, and still alive at the end of 2010

This accounted for 60% of the 1.8 million people diagnosed and living with cancer at the end of 2010, and accounted for 11% of all people aged 65 and over.

33% (596,800) of the total 1.8 million cancer survivors were aged 75 and over, and accounted for 12% of all people aged 75 and over.

9% (171,100) of the total 1.8 million cancer survivors were aged 85 and over, and accounted for 12% of all people 85 and over years.

There was a **50/50** distribution between male and female cancer survivors aged 75 and over at the end of the 20-year period

There was a higher proportion of cancer survivors aged 75 and over in the least deprived areas when compared to the most deprived for England, Scotland and Wales (this pattern differed for Northern Ireland). These findings are similar to those found for all ages.

The crude prevalence rates vary considerably across localities for the over 75s. For example in England the Commissioning Clinical Groups (CCGs) crude rates range from 9,524 to 14,741 per 100,000 for this age group. This will reflect differences in the profile of that population. Further analysis will explore this variation.

Around **137,000** of the male cancer survivors aged 75 and over at the end of the 20 year period had a diagnosis of prostate cancer making it the most common cancer type for all the survivors in this period

This accounted for 49% of the total number of men diagnosed and living with prostate cancer for the 20 year period.

## CONCLUSION

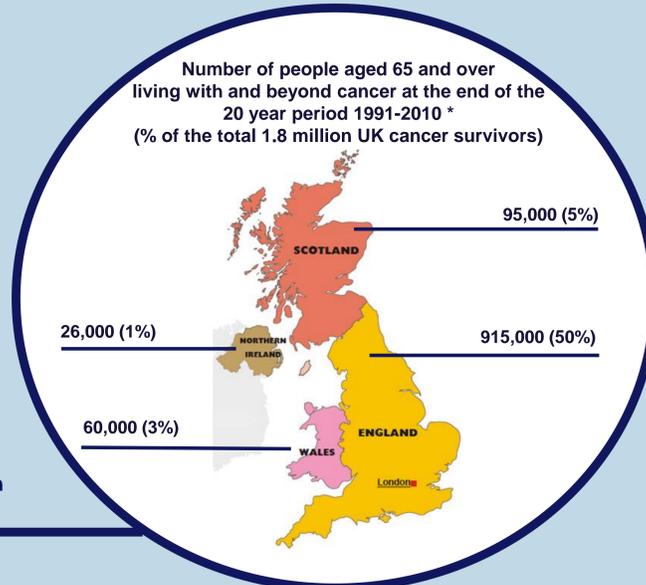
For the first time our study provides an accurate and more detailed national picture of older people living with and beyond cancer in the UK. The analysis shows the number of older people that have been diagnosed and living with cancer, and demonstrates there is variation in their characteristics and needs when analysed by the people's demographics, cancer type, locality and by different stages along their pathway.

Understanding the number and characteristics of older people diagnosed with cancer is valuable information that can be used to inform service planning, treatment provision and support older people at the right time and the right place, particularly as the number of people living with cancer rises.

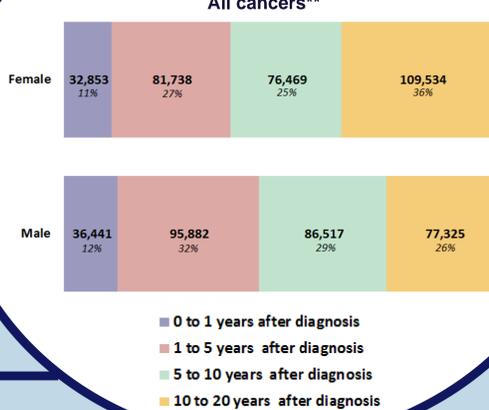
Future work will explore the data in more detail, through more in depth analysis and discussion with experts for insight on the findings. We will also analyse prevalence over a longer period (e.g complete prevalence) and by other variables (e.g comorbidities, multiple primaries) to further understand the needs of older people living with cancer.

## UK 20-Year Cancer Prevalence

based on people diagnosed with cancer between 1991 and 2010 and still alive at the end of 2010 \*



## Number of cancer survivors aged 75 and over at the end of the 20 year period\* by time since diagnosis and gender



More than **One third** (36%) of the women cancer survivors aged 75 and over at the end of the 20 year period were long term survivors (e.g still alive 10-20 years after their diagnoses)

This compares to 26% for men.

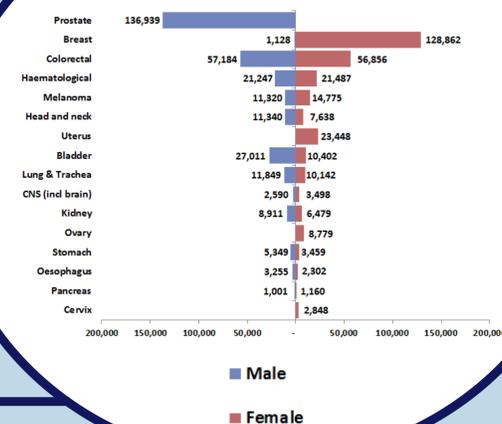
Around 1 in ten (69,624) of people aged 75 and over diagnosed with cancer between 1991 and 2010 and alive at the end of 2010 were diagnosed between 2009 and 2010 (the last and most recent year of the 20 year period).

Almost **129,000** of women cancer survivors aged 75 and over at the end of the 2010 year period had a diagnosis of breast cancer, making it the most common cancer type for these survivors

This accounted for 26% of the total number of women survivors diagnosed and living with and beyond breast cancer for the 20 year period.

Colorectal cancer was the second most common cancer in women – also true for men - with 56,856 women having had a diagnosis of this cancer in the 20-year period. This is less than half of the number of diagnoses for breast cancer, but at least more than double than any of the other cancers types analysed.

## Number of cancer survivors aged 75 and over at the end of the 20 year period\* by cancer type and gender

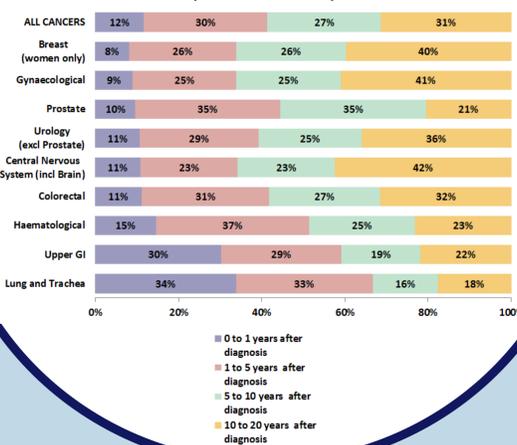


For those aged 75 and over at the end of the 20 year period that had a diagnosis of breast, gynaecological or CNS & brain cancers, around

**40%** were long term survivors

(still alive 10-20 years after their diagnosis)

## Cancer survivors aged 75 and over at the end of the 20 year period\* by time since diagnosis and cancer site groupings (% distributions)



The cancer groupings used here include a disparate collection of tumour types with markedly different survival patterns. Further analysis will explore specific cancer types.

## NOTES / REFERENCES / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

\* The prevalence for Northern Ireland is 18-year prevalence as data are only available from 1993 to 2010.

\*\* All malignant cancers excluding non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC) (ICD10 codes C00-C97, excluding C44).

Reference: (1) Maddams J, et al. Projections of cancer prevalence in the United Kingdom, 2010-2040. British Journal of Cancer. 2012 Sep 25;107(7):1195-202.

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