

What we know about cancer incidence & prevalence in American Samoa

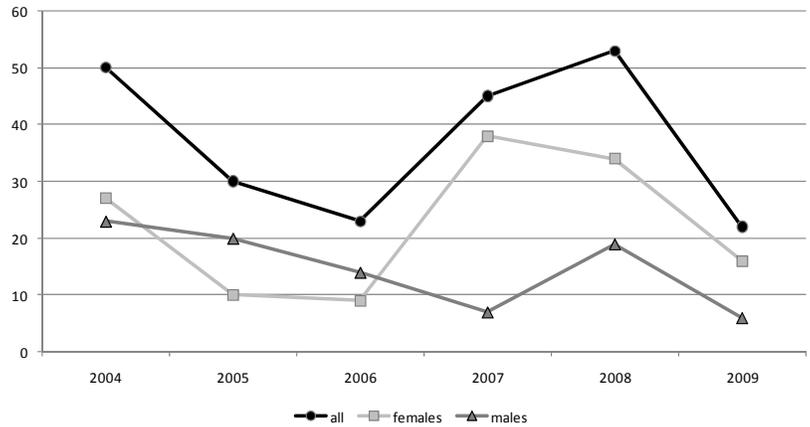
Cancer is the second leading cause of death in American Samoa (1).

Incidence

Cancer incidence is the number of new cases in a population in a certain period of time. Data from the American Samoa Cancer Registry captures cases of cancer diagnosed in the Territory and some cases of off-island diagnosis where the patient expires in American Samoa. Preliminary data from 2004-2009 shows 223 new cases of cancer were diagnosed in 134 women and 89 men (2). Many patients with findings 'suspicious of cancer' go off-island, usually to Hawai'i, for further testing and are not currently captured in the Registry (3).

Known Cancer Incidence 2004-09*

Source: American Samoa Cancer Registry
*preliminary data as of 4/8/2010



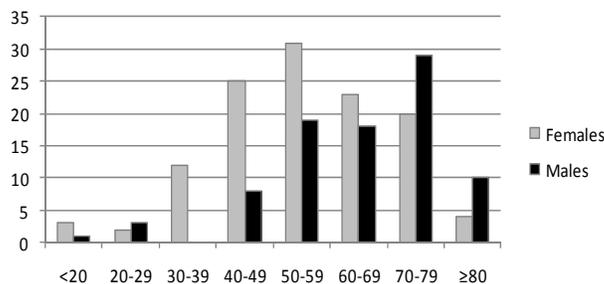
2004 and 2008 saw the most new cases of cancer over the six-year period, with a sharp drop in 2009. Cancer diagnoses in women saw the greatest number of cases detected in 2007 and 2008 with a significant decrease in 2009. Cancer diagnoses amongst men steadily decreased between 2004 and 2007, increased in 2008 and dropped dramatically again in 2009. There is little reason to believe less people developed cancer in 2009. It is more likely fewer people were screened or those with suspicious findings went off-island.

Most Common Female Sites		Most Common Male Sites	
	# cases		# cases
breast	33	prostate	20
uterine/endometrial	31	lung/bronchus	15
colon/rectal	13	stomach	12
stomach	12	colon/rectal	9
cervical	9	brain/other nervous system	7
ovarian	6	lymphoma	7

Cancer was found in more than 20 different sites. The most common cancer sites for the population as a whole are 1) breast, 2) uterine/endometrial, 3) stomach, 4) colon/rectal, 5) prostate, and 6) lung/bronchus (2), reflecting little change compared to 1998-2002 statistics (1, 4). Many of the most common cancers found in American Samoa are gender specific with a particular burden on women. Based on data from the past 6 years, the average incidence of cancer in the population was 37 new cases per year--22 in women and 15 in men.

Age at Cancer Diagnosis 2004-09*

Source: American Samoa Cancer Registry
*preliminary data as of 4/8/2010



Age at cancer diagnosis ranged from 13 to 90 years with a median age of 56 for women and 67 for men. Cancer diagnoses peak in women two decades before men pointing to an urgent need to early screening for women (1). Cancer screening is often not found in medical records so overall screening rates are unknown. And because most cancer cases are cared for off-island, treatment records of individuals diagnosed in American Samoa are usually incomplete (3).



What we know about cancer incidence & prevalence in American Samoa

Prevalence

Prevalence refers to the current number of people diagnosed in prior years who are still living with the disease. The total cancer prevalence for American Samoa is unknown.

Of the 223 cases of cancer diagnosed between 2004-2009, as many as 94 people (42%) are believed to have died from the disease, 41 women and 52 men. As many as 129 patients (58%) are currently cancer survivors, 93 women and 37 men however, some patients diagnosed in American Samoa have likely expired off-island (2,3). Although more women were diagnosed with cancer, 69% are cancer survivors compared to 42% of men (2).

Life after a cancer diagnosis is alarmingly short; 88% of women and 92% of men are thought to have died from the disease in the same year of diagnosis or the in following calendar year (2). Males are more likely to be diagnosed with cancer after metastasis (4).

Sources

(1) Cancer in American Samoa. *Pacific Health Dialogue*. 11(2). 2004. (2) American Samoa Cancer Registry April, 2010 (3) personal correspondence with Cancer Registrar, Angelina Stevens April 9, 2010 (4) Mishra, SI et al. Cancer among Indigenous Populations: The Experience of American Samoans. *Cancer*. 78(8):1553-1557. 1996.