Cancer cases on the rise but death rate is falling

THE GIANT KILLER

Cancer is the second leading cause of death globally

NUMBER OF NEW CANCER CASES

	WORLD	INDIA
1990	85,10,588	6,24,132
2013	1,49,42,583	11,70,071

COMMON CANCERS IN INDIA

MEN	WOMEN
Mouth cancer 84,782	Breast cancer 1,51,304
Other neoplasms 52,454	Cervical cancer 88,419
Lung cancer 49,494	Other neoplasms 55,273
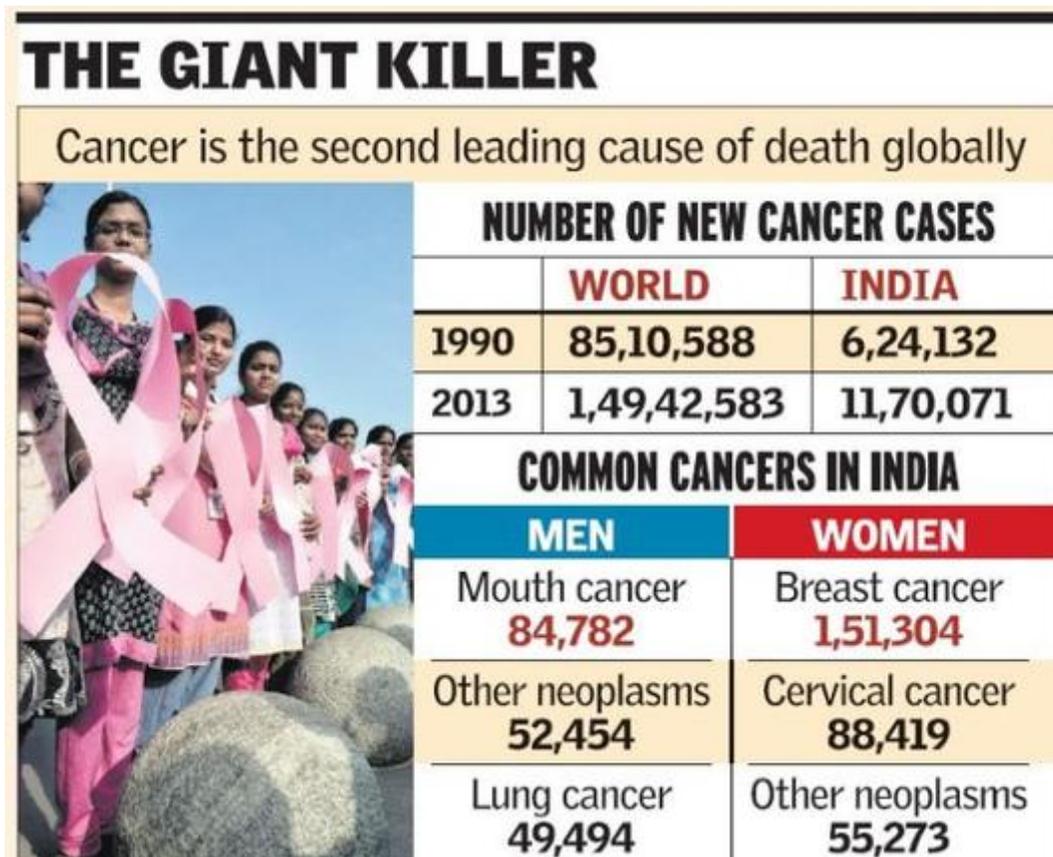
Incidence in India half the global figure

The incidence of cancer has grown over the last decade in India although the rate of mortality has fallen, new data shows. Breast cancer is the fastest growing in terms of incidence for women and kills the most, and prostate cancer is the fastest-growing in incidence for men, while lung cancer killed the most men.

An international consortium of researchers led by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington analysed 28 cancer groups in 188 countries.

The study, "The Global Burden of Cancer 2013," was published in the journal JAMA Oncology on Thursday.

Globally, the incidence of cancer is rising, but even as it has become the second leading cause of death, mortality is falling with better detection and treatment across countries.

In 2013, there were 14.9 million new cases and 8.2 million deaths worldwide. Among men, prostate cancer caused 1.4 million new cases and 293,000 deaths. For women, breast cancer caused 1.8 million new cases and 464,000 deaths.

India has a lower incidence of cancer than the global average, with just half the number of new cases recorded every year per capita than the global average. However, the incidence has grown from over 700 new cases per million populations to nearly 1,000 new cases per million people, the numbers show.

'Mouth cancer cases double'

The study, "The Global Burden of Cancer 2013," published in the journal JAMA Oncology on Thursday said the death rate from cancer has declined in India.

"India and its south Asian neighbors are unusual for their particularly high rates of mouth cancer," Dr. Lalit Dandona, professor at PHFI and IHME and study co-author, said, noting that this was largely related to the practice of chewing tobacco. While mouth cancer does not feature among the 10 most occurring worldwide, it is second among men and women combined in India. The number of new mouth cancer cases in India more than doubled between 1990 and 2013 from 55,480 to 127,168.

"The good news is that it is highly preventable," Dr. Dandona said. Similarly, mortality from breast cancer, which is responsible for most deaths of women from cancer both in India and globally, can be reduced through early screening, he said.

Breast cancer is the most common one in India, with also the fastest growing incidence for the country. Stomach cancer is the leading cause of death by cancer for the population as a whole, while lung cancer and breast cancer kill the most men and women respectively.