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### CANCER IN MIDDLE AGED ADULTS AND IN THE ELDERLY: CORRESPONDENCE AMONG INCIDENCE, MORTALITY AND SURVIVAL TIME TRENDS IN ITALY

Alberto Quaglia<sup>1</sup>; Carlotta Buzzoni<sup>2,3</sup>; Roberto Lillini<sup>1,4</sup>; Marina Vercelli<sup>1,5</sup>; AIRTUM Working Group

<sup>1</sup> Liguria Region CR, Descriptive Epidemiology Unit, IST, Genoa, Italia - [alberto.quaglia@istge.it](mailto:alberto.quaglia@istge.it)

<sup>2</sup> AIRTUM Italian Association of Cancer Registries, Florence, Italia

<sup>3</sup> Tuscany CR, ISPO, Florence, Italia

<sup>4</sup> "Vita e Salute" San Raffaele University, Milano, Italia

<sup>5</sup> Department of Health Sciences, University of Genoa, Genoa, Italia

#### Introduction

The aim is to analyse incidence and mortality trend in Italy over the period 1998-2005, considering 50-69 and  $\geq 70$  age groups. The results will be interpreted in the light of 1986-2002 survival trends.

#### Material and methods

All trends were computed using data from AIRTUM. Incidence and mortality trends were analysed through joinpoint regression models to obtain Annual Percent Changes (APC). 5-year relative survival was computed along with Relative Excess Risk of death (RER).

#### Results

Colorectal cancer incidence was increasing in men and not in women, whereas mortality decreased in middle aged adults. The difference in survival between middle aged adults and elderly did not increase, confirming similar incidence and mortality trends in the two groups.

Breast cancer showed large differences by age. Incidence grew until 2000 and then declined in younger women, was steady in the elderly; mortality decreased quicker in 50-69 vs  $\geq 70$  group (APC -1.2; -0.7 ns). This behaviour was consistent with survival trend: the gap between younger adults and the elderly widened over the period (RER from 1.2 to 2.0). For prostate cancer; incidence increased more in younger than older people and mortality fell in younger group (-1.7) and grew in the elderly (+2.6 ns). The difference in survival increased strikingly (RER from 1.1 to 2.0).

#### Conclusions

For breast and prostate cancers the screening is more common in the 50-69 age group, and younger patients undergo treatments with curative intent and adjuvant therapies more frequently than the elderly. This explains the alarming disadvantage in survival and mortality of the older age group. The less frequent screening for colorectal cancer explains the similar trends between the two age groups.