



Cancer Overtakes Heart Disease: 12 European Countries



Despite cancer accounting for less than half the number of deaths than CVD in Europe as a whole, in nine of the 15 countries which were members of the European Union before 2004 (EU-15) and in another country that was among those that joined the EU afterwards (EU-28), more men now die from cancer than CVD. These countries are: Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and the UK. This was also the case in non-EU members Norway and Israel. Among women, more die from cancer than CVD in Denmark and Israel.

New data on the burden of CVD in Europe for 2016, published in the *European Heart Journal*, show that in the European region, CVD caused more than four million deaths each year, 45 percent of all deaths. However, success in preventing and treating the disease has led to large decreases in CVD in a number of countries.

"These figures highlight the wide inequalities between European countries in deaths from CVD. The 12 countries in which cancer has overtaken CVD as the main cause of death are all found in Western Europe, with nine of them having been members of the EU before 2004. The highest numbers of deaths from CVD tend to be seen in Eastern European countries," said Dr Nick Townsend, senior researcher at the BHF Centre on Population Approaches for Non-Communicable Disease Prevention at the University of Oxford, UK.

In France, where cancer was first seen to overtake CVD as the main cause of death in men, figures from the most recent year available (2011) show that 92,375 men died from cancer and 64,659 died from CVD. In Spain, the next country in which cancer overtook CVD, 67,711 men died from cancer and 53,487 died from CVD in 2013 (the year with the most recent data). In the UK in 2013, 87,511 men died from cancer and 79,935 from CVD.

"Although we have seen progress across Europe in the prevention and treatment of CVD, leading to decreases in mortality from it, it is clear that such progress is not consistent across the continent. With higher mortality from CVD still found in Eastern Europe and non-EU countries, it is clear that the progress that has been made in Western Europe and most EU countries is yet to be achieved equally throughout the region," said Dr Townsend.

Source: [Eureka](#)

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