

World Cancer Day: Cancer Services Investment Could Save Millions of Lives



On World Cancer Day 2015, leading global public health experts from the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) announce that millions of lives can be saved through affordable increases in the investment into cancer services throughout the world, to tackle the increase in cancer cases through population growth and ageing, particularly in developing countries. In particular:

- **Increased annual international community funding** of US\$18 billion globally could save three million lives per year by 2030 and many more in succeeding decades, through prevention, earlier detection and improved care for cancer patients
- **Increased funding** will also provide pain relief to ease the deaths of millions who will die of cancer during this period
- **A tripling of tobacco taxes** alone would raise tax revenue available to governments to US\$400 billion annually and could encourage one-third of smokers to quit, according to today's new figures.

“More than eight million people a year die from cancer of which more than 60% of those deaths occurred in low- and middle-income countries, the majority in the middle-income segment”, says Professor Tezer Kutluk, President of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC). “The absolute number of cancer cases in developing countries is set to rise dramatically because of population growth and ageing, so action must be taken now. Whilst the US\$18 billion package is affordable for many countries, it’s unrealistic to expect the world’s poorest nations to contribute to this investment without international support,” stresses Prof. Kutluk.

[Data presented](#) at the World Cancer Congress in December from [DCP3. Cancer](#) (DCP3: Disease Control Priorities, Third Edition, Volume 6 Cancer. Chapter 1: Summary and Recommendations) calls on middle-income countries with the means to do so to increase spending on cancer by 2-5% of their health budgets. Low-income countries – where services are least developed, facilities largely absent and trained cancer experts few – will need support from the international community to build capacity, a process that is likely to take a decade or more.

The World Health Organization recommended “best buys” for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in 2011, including:

- Tobacco taxation, regulation and control to reduce tobacco-related cancers
- Hepatitis B (HBV) vaccination to prevent liver cancer
- Screening and treatment for precancerous cervical lesions

DCP3 Cancer adds basic treatment and pain control interventions to this list, which together create an “essential package:”

- HPV vaccination for adolescent girls to prevent cervical cancer
- Pain control for advanced cancer
- Treatment of selected paediatric cancers
- Diagnosing and treating early-stage breast and colon cancers

These measures address high-burden cancers (cervical, breast and colon cancers), highly-curable cancers, (selected) paediatric cancers. All interventions are cost-effective, affordable in most middle-income countries (and attainable in low-income countries, with international assistance) and feasible within the 2030 timeframe.

“It is not beyond us to prevent premature deaths from cancer, so we simply cannot sit back and continue to let the global burden grow. On World Cancer Day 2015 we demand that the international community unites to invest in improved cancer control interventions, particularly in low- and middle-income countries,” urges Cary Adams, Chief Executive Officer, Union for International Cancer Control (UICC). “Feasible and affordable solutions exist across the entire spectrum of cancer such as increased tobacco control, earlier detection and treatment, plus access to life-saving vaccination programmes, which if implemented, will help to significantly reduce disease-based poverty and prevent millions of preventable deaths.”

Source: [World Cancer Day](#)
Image source: World Cancer Day

