

Types of cancer prevalent in South Africa

One in six South African men and one in seven South African women will get cancer during their lives. Cancer is a great equalizer. It knows no boundaries of class, race and gender, sex or age. It can strike anyone at any time.

And yet, if one takes a look at South African statistics, age, race, gender and socio-economic status play an important part in determining the prevalence of particular cancers.

Cancer and the South African woman

The cancers affecting all South African women, in order of prevalence, are:

- Breast cancer
- Cervical cancer
- Colo-rectal cancer
- Lung cancer
- Oesophageal cancer

Certain cancers are more prevalent amongst black South African women. They are, in order of prevalence:

- Cervical cancer
- Breast cancer
- Oesophageal cancer
- Uterine cancer
- Lung cancer

Cancer and the South African man

The cancers affecting all South African men, in order of prevalence, are:

- Prostate cancer
- Lung cancer
- Oesophageal cancer
- Bladder cancer
- Colo-rectal cancer

The cancers more prevalent amongst black men are:

- Oesophageal cancer
- Lung cancer
- Liver cancer
- Cancer of the Larynx

(Statistics provided by Ayesha Sassman, Information Officer of the Cancer Association of South Africa)

Cancer and the South African child

The cancers most prevalent amongst South African children follows a worldwide trend, according to Sassman :

- leukaemia (24 percent)
- brain tumours (21 percent)
- lymphomas (16 percent)
- cancer of the kidney – also known as Wilm's tumour (10 percent)

- cancer of the sympathetic nervous system, known as neuroblastoma.