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Cancer survival statistics updated for Wales

The latest Cancer Survival in Wales statistics published today by the Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit (WCISU) at Public Health Wales covering the period 2002-2019 shows a mixed picture.

One-year and five-year cancer survival increased across Wales for many commonly diagnosed cancer types such as lung and prostate. However, there has been a levelling off and even a decrease in recent years for some less commonly diagnosed cancers such as bladder, anus, larynx and uterine.

The cancer stage at diagnosis remains important in determining long term outcomes. Survival decreases as stage at diagnosis advances for example; colorectal cancer has a one-year survival of 87 percent when diagnosed at stage 3 this figure more than halves to 41 percent if diagnosed at stage 4.

Although the recent improvements in cancer survival are encouraging, the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic will affect cancer survival remains unknown. The analysis published today uses ONS published life tables which do not fully account for changes in background mortality due to the Covid pandemic. Further research is underway to investigate and understand how cancer detection and treatment may have changed as a result.

Dr Giles Greene, Head of Population Cancer Research at WCISU said "We have engaged in collaborative research with Swansea University, Queens University Belfast and Oxford University. We are examining how the unprecedented Coronavirus pandemic response affected cancer services and whether the response impacted long-standing health inequalities to give us a better understanding of how the pandemic has affected overall cancer survival rates."