Death rates for breast, bowel, lung and prostate cancer combined have fallen by almost a third in the last 20 years. Individually, death rates for breast cancer have fallen by 38%, bowel cancer by 34%, lung cancer by 27% and prostate cancer by 21%.

This significant decrease is thanks to achievements in research, improved early detection, and the development of more effective treatments, along with falling smoking rates over the last 20 years. Today around 3,400 fewer people die from breast cancer a year, and almost 3,000 fewer die from bowel cancer than 20 years ago.

These figures were published as Children’s Cancer Awareness Month began. We have made great progress in helping more and more children survive cancer than ever before, but this work is not finished – better, kinder treatments must continue to be our target. Our researchers are making great strides every year to help even more children beat the disease.

• Find out more in our press release.
• View our latest childhood cancer statistics.

Death rates in top four cancer killers fall by a third over 20 years

Death rates for breast, bowel, lung and prostate cancer combined have fallen by almost a third in the last 20 years. Individually, death rates for breast cancer have fallen by 38%, bowel cancer by 34%, lung cancer by 27% and prostate cancer by 21%.

This significant decrease is thanks to improvements in research, improved early detection, and the development of more effective treatments, along with falling smoking rates over the last 20 years. Today around 3,400 fewer people die from breast cancer a year, and almost 3,000 fewer die from bowel cancer than 20 years ago.

Improved surgery, radiotherapy and drugs for breast cancer and the recent introduction of bowel cancer screening is likely to further reduce mortality rates.

Falling smoking prevalence means that there are now more than 3,000 fewer lung cancer deaths than 20 years ago. However, death rates have actually risen in women as smoking prevalence began to fall later in women than in men.

There has also been very little improvement in lung cancer survival so we have made it a priority to stem lung cancer mortality through earlier diagnosis and trials for improved treatments.

• Find out more in our press release
• View our latest cancer mortality statistics

cruk.org/cancerstats
FOUR IN 10 PANCREATIC CANCERS COULD BE PREVENTED BY LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Almost 40% of pancreatic cancers (one of the deadliest forms of cancer) could be avoided in the UK through maintaining a healthy weight and not smoking.

Each year, 8,800 people in the UK are diagnosed with the disease, but survival rates remain very low, with only three per cent of people surviving the disease for five years or more after diagnosis.

These figures clearly demonstrate the need to find better ways of diagnosing and treating the disease while also helping people to take steps to reduce their risk of developing pancreatic and other cancers, by not smoking and by keeping a healthy weight – especially if they are prone to carrying too much around their middle.

- Find out more in our press release
- Find out more about the risk factors for pancreatic cancer
- View our statistics on preventable cancers

PANCREATIC CANCER SURVIVAL AT STANDSTILL FOR FOUR DECADES

Long-term survival from pancreatic cancer has failed to improve in 40 years, with the outlook remaining the lowest of the 21 most common cancers. Today, just over three per cent of pancreatic cancer patients survive for at least five years, only a fraction more than the two per cent who survived that long in the early 1970’s.

Across all cancers, half of patients now survive at least twice that long. However, most cases of pancreatic cancer go undetected until it is too late for surgery; and with the lack of effective tests and treatments for the disease, the majority of patients still die within a year.

Harpal Kumar, Cancer Research UK’s CEO said “It is shocking that so many patients are still losing their lives to pancreatic cancer, which is why we've made it a priority to ignite a new wave of research that will see the disease detected earlier and much needed treatments getting to patients sooner”.

- Find out more in our press release
- View more statistics about survival rates for pancreatic cancer

ACHIEVING THE WORLD’S BEST CANCER SURVIVAL

UK cancer survival has doubled in the last 40 years. But it still lags behind the best in the world. Why?

In our blog on the NCIN conference in June, we look back at the international comparisons of UK cancer survival that first raised concerns about our cancer care and examine the studies making use of cancer data to look at where we are failing to match the best.

Studies like these are pointing the way to improving UK cancer survival so that it matches the best in the world and we strongly believe that can only be achieved through smart use of patient data.

- Read the full article on our Science Blog.