Abstract

Purpose : The Population-based Cancer Registry of Cali aims to report all new cases in permanent residents within the limits of the city of Cali. Time trends of cancer incidence and mortality are described. The registry has been in continuous operation for 50 years. Methods: Cancer cases reports are obtained actively by visiting all sources of information: hospitals, pathology departments, hematology laboratories, radiotherapy centers, government offices where death certificates are processed and physician’s offices. It is estimated that the reporting is at least 95% complete. Results: Drastic decreases are documented in rates for tumors causally related to infectious agents, especially cancers of the uterine cervix and the stomach. Gradual increases are documented in rates of tumors linked to affluence and the metabolic syndrome, especially cancers of the colon and the female breast. An unexpected increase in the incidence of papillary carcinoma of the thyroid gland in women is reported. Tobacco-related cancers, especially cancer of the lung, showed marked increase in incidence rates around 1970, apparently the beginning of an epidemic similar to the one reported in Western societies. But the increase in incidence stopped around 1980, resulting from a strong anti-smoking campaign launched in Colombia in the 1970s. Conclusions: The findings have influenced prevention strategies implemented by public health authorities, specially the establishment of a city-wide program to prevent cervix cancer via widespread use of vaginal cytology and anti-smoking campaigns. Also, new population-based cancer registries have been established in other Colombian cities as well as in Ecuador.

Keywords

Cancer, epidemiology, Cali, Colombia, cancer trends.