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**Epidemiology of gastrointestinal cancers: a systematic analysis**

Danpanichkul P, Suparan K, Tothanarungroj P, *et al.* Epidemiology of gastrointestinal cancers: a systematic analysis from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2021. *Gut* 2025; 74: 26-34. doi: 10.1136/gutjnl-2024-333227

Gastrointestinal cancers are one of the most common cancer types in the world. However, these cancers disproportionately result in mortality, with one third of global cancer mortality occurring due to gastrointestinal cancers.

In this publication, Danpanichkul *et al.,* sought to assess the global, regional and national burden of gastrointestinal cancers. This was performed using data extracted from the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) 2021 database. The GBD study is the largest study around the world that has sought to quantify the effect of health and disease internationally. Using this comprehensive database, Danpanichkul *et al.,* calculated age-standardised incidence rate (ASIR) and age-standardised death rate (ASDR) based on biological sex, region, and Sociodemographic Index (SDI).

Danpanichkul *et al.,* estimated that in 2021, there were 5.26 million incidences and 3.70 million deaths from gastrointestinal cancer. Colorectal cancer represented the greatest burden of all the gastrointestinal cancer types, followed by gastric, oesophageal, pancreatic, liver and biliary tract cancer. There were geographical and socioeconomic differences noted, with higher SDI countries having higher incidence rates for most types of gastrointestinal cancer. The ASIR was noted to be decreasing for certain cancers such as gastric and biliary tract cancer, but still increasing for colorectal, pancreatic and liver cancer from steatotic liver disease.

This study provides important updates on the trajectory of gastrointestinal cancers, and highlights the major challenges of cancers secondary to other diseases. These data could be used to support public health policies such as; reducing alcohol consumption, hepatitis B immunisation and tackling the burden of metabolic diseases.