

Cancer and ageing

Policy responses to meeting the needs of older people

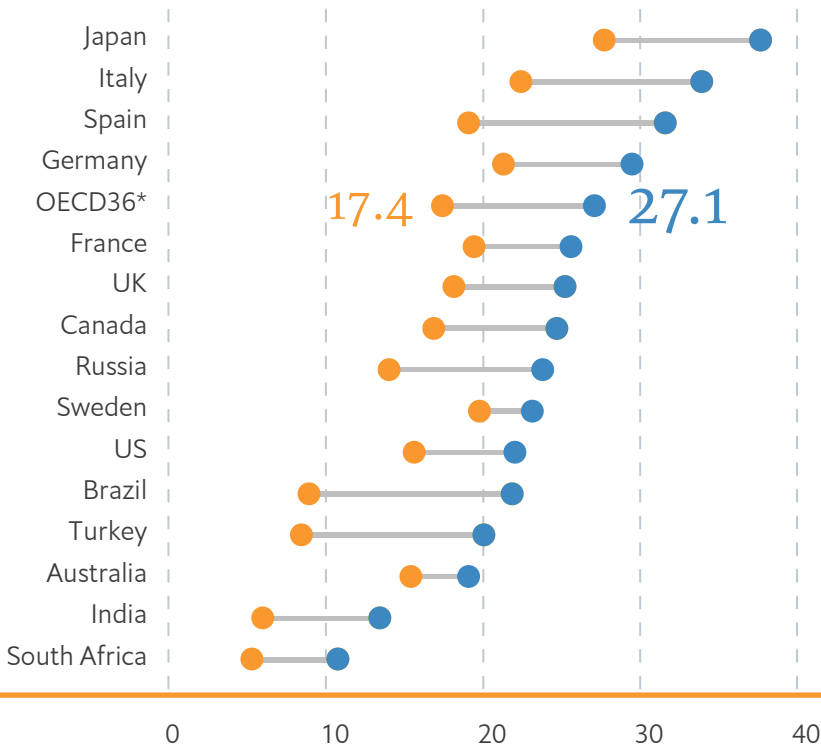
Cancer is a major global public health issue, being the second leading cause of deaths globally. Its incidence is on the rise as people age and life expectancies increase. While cancer poses a heavy burden on healthcare systems, policymakers need to address the unique circumstances that older people face when diagnosed with cancer and enhance existing services to better meet their needs as they go on this patient journey. It is crucial to help older people live as many healthy years as possible so they can continue to contribute to their families and to society.

Rapid demographic rise of older people

Share of population aged 65 and over

2017 2050

The proportion of the population aged 65 and over will rise from 17.4% in 2017 to 27.1% by 2050.

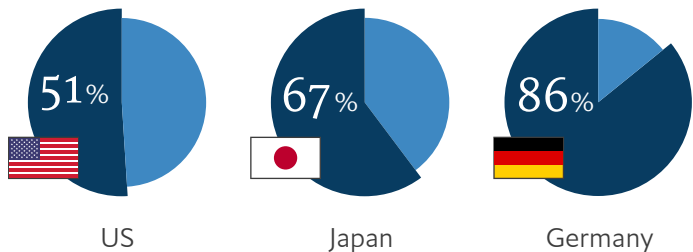


Population aged 65 years and over (%)
*The 36 member states of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Source: OECD Health Statistics 2019.

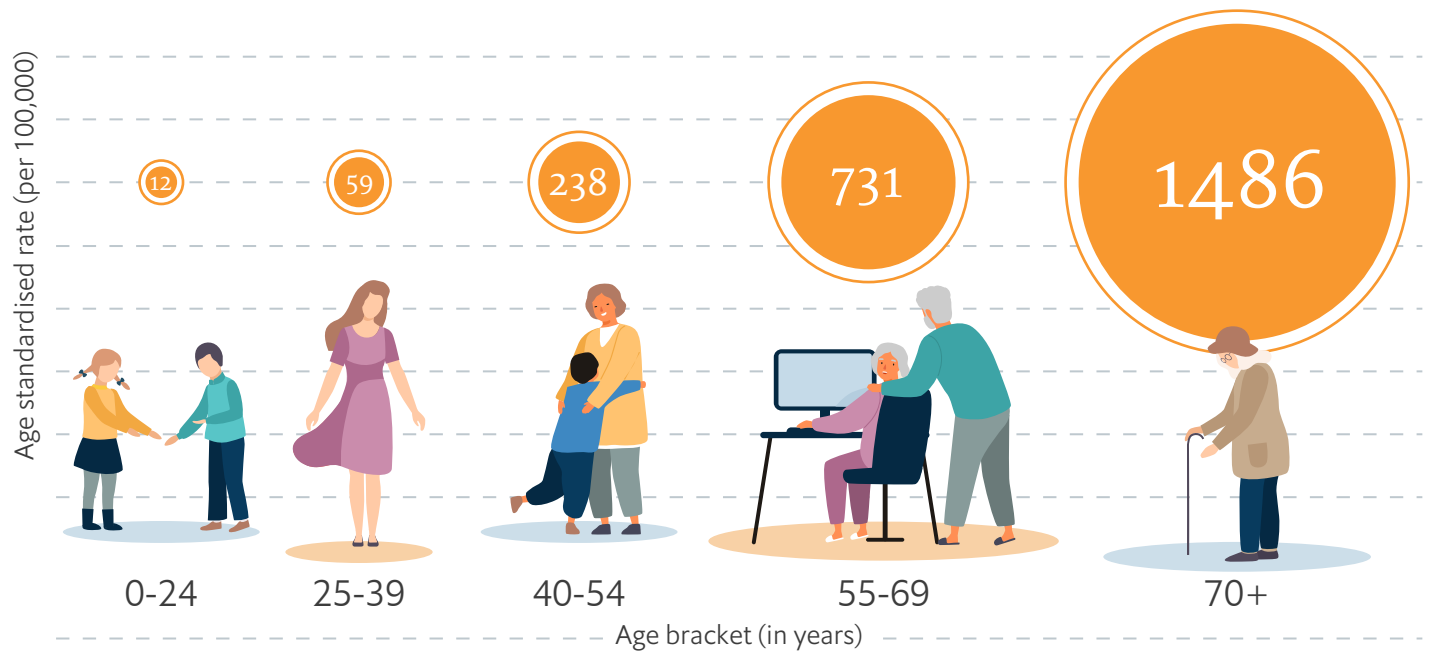
Older people play an important role in the economy as consumers, earners, caregivers and participants in local organisations.

By 2050, the 55+ age-group will account for 86% of spending growth in Germany, 67% in Japan and 51% in the US.



As people age the incidence of cancer also rises

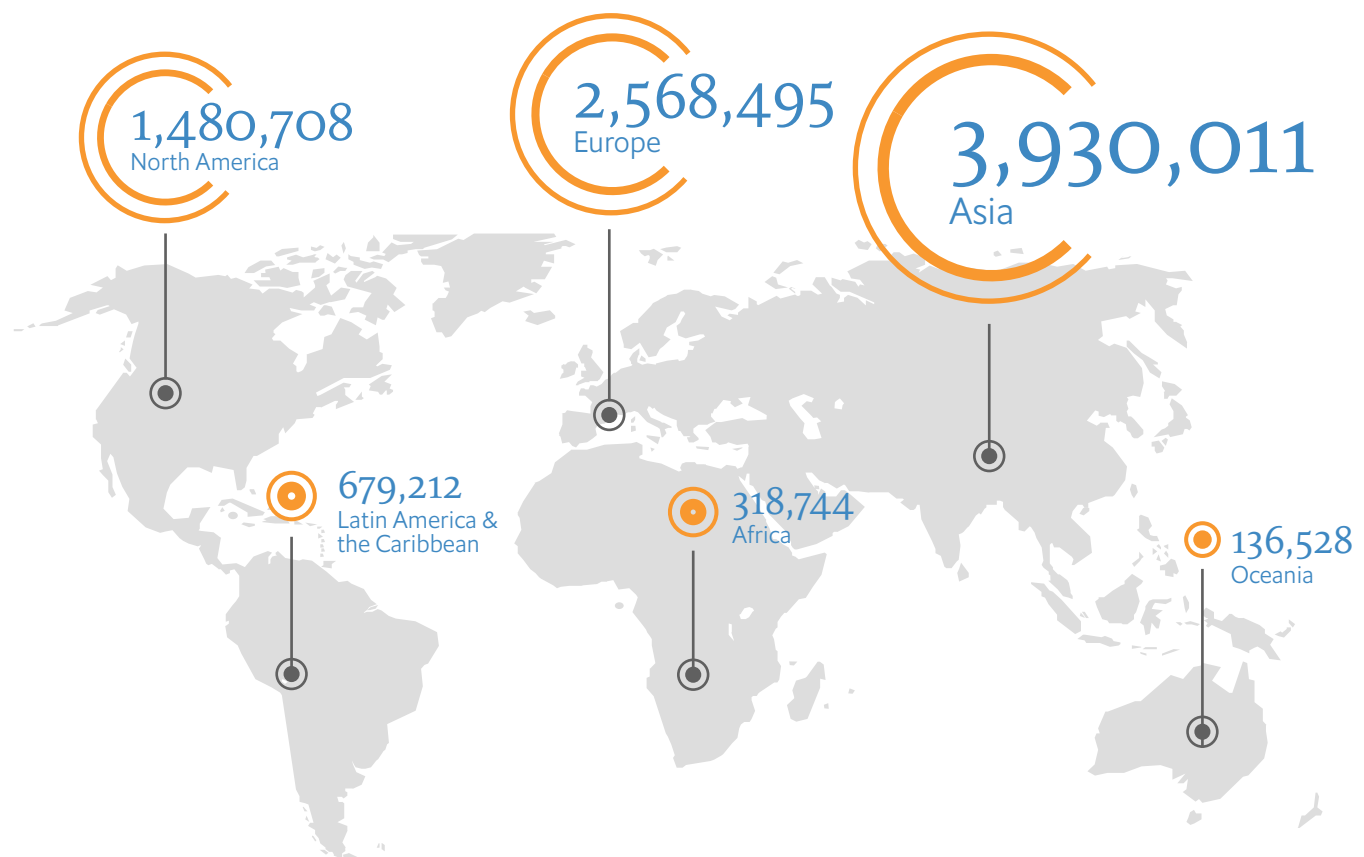
Global incidence rate of all cancers



Source: GLOBOCAN 2018.

Globally, Asia and Europe are seeing the greatest number of new cancer cases in older people

Number of new cancer cases in 2018 in people aged 65 and above

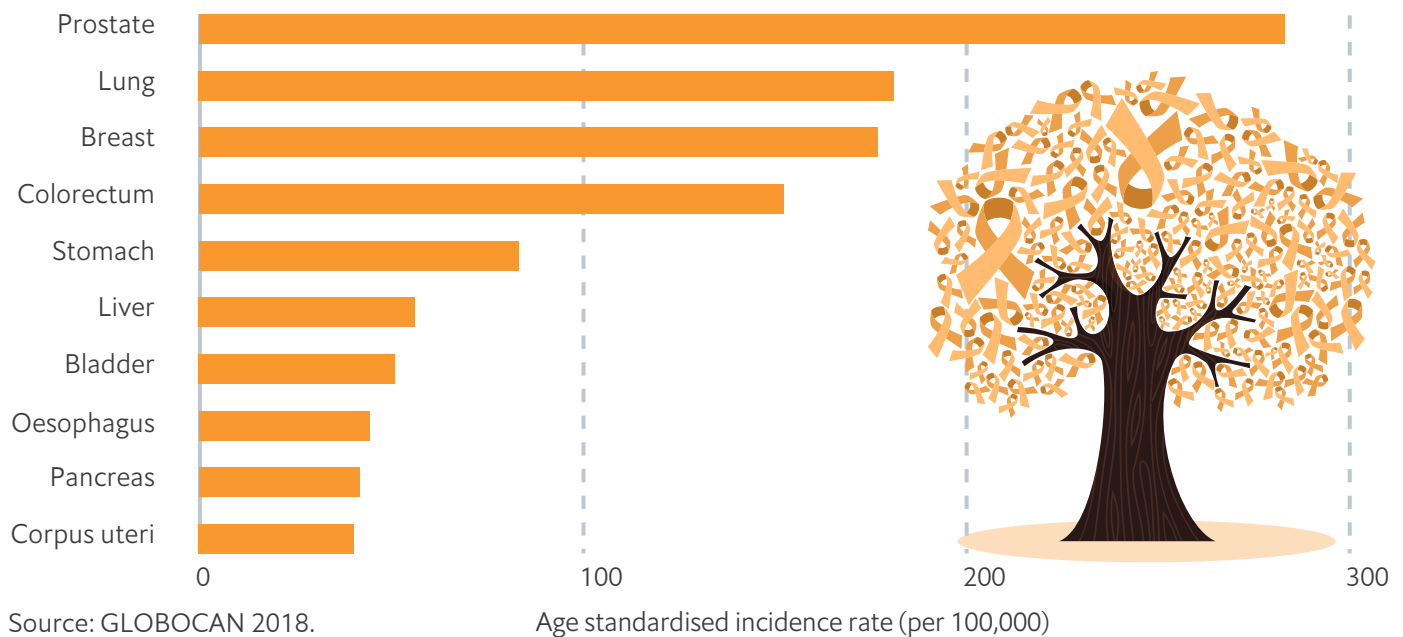


Source: GLOBOCAN 2018.

Common cancer types in older people

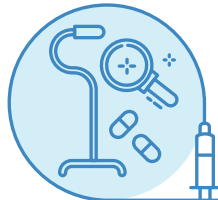
The most common cancers by incidence in older people are those affecting the prostate, lung, breast and colon. Mortality rates for older people with cancer are higher than for younger people.

Global incidence rates of top 10 cancers in people aged 65+



Solutions to improve the patient journey

Policymakers need to consider the special circumstances affecting older patients with cancer and provide the support they need, according to EIU research.



Ensuring older people are treated fully for cancer as per their needs and be aware of the intermittent bias against screening and treatment.

Encouraging the use of geriatric assessments so clinicians and healthcare systems are in a better position to meet the needs of older people.



Making better use of real-world evidence to help manage older cancer patients and backing more incentives to encourage their inclusion in clinical studies.

Partnering with patient groups which have developed resources and special services to meet the needs of older cancer patients undergoing the cancer journey.



Instating a multidisciplinary team approach as best cancer care practice for older patients.

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