

FACT SHEET THE DISEASES

- Leukaemias, lymphomas and myeloma are cancers. Specifically, haematological or blood cancers.
- Myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS), myeloproliferative disorders (MPDs), amyloidosis and aplastic anaemia are related disorders.

National Incidence

- Leukaemias, lymphomas, myeloma and related blood disorders can develop in anyone, of any age, at any time.
- In 2009, 9,792 Australians are projected to be diagnosed with leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma; the equivalent of at least one every hourⁱ.
- Of these, half are expected to be diagnosed with lymphomas, a third with leukaemias and a fifth with myeloma.
- It is estimated that every two hours, someone loses their life to leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma.
- It is projected that in 2010, 4,734 Australians will be diagnosed with lymphomas, 3,138 with leukaemias and 2,191 with myeloma; more than 10,000 people in total.
- Lymphoma is the fifth most common cancer in Australia (fifth in Australian women and sixth most common in men)ⁱⁱ.
- Myeloma had the second highest increase in cancer incidence and non-Hodgkin lymphoma the fifth highest increase in the 10 years between 1993 and 2003ⁱⁱⁱ.
- Between 2002-2011, projections indicate that blood cancers will increase significantly (37% for women, 54% for men)ⁱ

Adults

- The most common forms of leukaemia in adults are Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia (CLL) and Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML). These leukaemias typically occur in adults aged over 50, peaking in the over 70's age group.
- The majority of people diagnosed with lymphomas and myeloma are over the age of 50.

Children

- Leukaemia (Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia) is the most common form of childhood cancer.
- In 2003^{vi}, 125 children, aged 14 and younger, were diagnosed with leukaemia and a further 47 diagnosed with lymphoma. Of these numbers 78 are aged 0-4 years of age. No cases of myeloma were recorded in children under the age of 15. The youngest person diagnosed with myeloma in 2003 was over 30 years old.

Survival Rates

- Five years after diagnosis, about half of adults with leukaemia will have survived, while 80% of children (0-14 years) will surviveⁱⁱⁱ.
- For non-Hodgkin or B-cell and T-cell lymphomas, over 60% will have survived five years after diagnosis. In Hodgkin lymphoma, about 85% will survive five years.

Table 1: Relative survival between 1998-2004ⁱⁱ

Cancer	1yr	5yr	10yr
Leukaemia	67%	48%	38%
NHL	78%	62%	52%
HL	93%	85%	81%

- With the new therapies developed in the late 1990's we expect significant improvements in survival of people with leukaemias, lymphomas and myeloma.

Prevalence and Survival

- The number of people living with these diseases is estimated to be three to four times the annual incidence > 31,000 to 41,000 by 2011ⁱ.
- 48,431 Australians were diagnosed with leukaemia between 1982 and 2004. In 2004, 15,365 had survivedⁱⁱ.
- 70,195 were diagnosed with lymphoma between 1982 and 2004; 31,729 had survived by 2004.
- Typically more Australian males are diagnosed with and die from leukaemias, lymphomas and myeloma than females. This trend is also found with cancer in general.
- A recent report (AIHW & AACR 2008) shows that for both men and women, cancer survival increased with socioeconomic advantage for cancers diagnosed in 2000-2004ⁱⁱ.
- Data from AIHW & AACR (2008) show that cancer survival decreased with increasing remoteness for people diagnosed in 1998 – 2004, especially in menⁱⁱ.

Causes

- The cause of these cancers and related blood disorders remains relatively unknown.
- There are certain factors that may put some people at a higher risk of developing these diseases. These include exposure to high doses of radiation and ongoing exposure to certain industrial or environmental chemicals.
- In leukaemia, factors may include a person's genetic history, exposure to intense radiation and certain chemicals including benzene and viruses like the Human T-Cell leukaemia virus.
- In lymphoma, people with severe immunodeficiency or rare infections that lead to chronic inflammation are a greater risk of developing lymphoma.

Treatment

- These diseases often develop with little warning, requiring immediate and intensive treatment. Patients with acute leukaemia typically begin treatment within 24 hours of diagnosis.

- On average, treatment lasts for eight months but can last for years (treatment for acute lymphoblastic leukaemia will be at least two years).
- The type of treatment depends on the stage of the disease at diagnosis, the person's age and their general health.
- Treatments can include chemotherapy, radiotherapy, immunotherapies, targeting therapies, bone marrow or stem cell transplantation or a combination of these.

State Incidence

- The incidence of leukaemias, lymphomas and myeloma per state^{iv} reflects state or territory population size: NSW – 2,399; ACT – 90; VIC – 1,827; WA – 548; TAS – 182; QLD – 1,239; SA – 696; NT – 28
- For lymphomas, the highest rate is found in the ACT (21.9 cases per 100,000 people). The highest rate for leukaemias is found in South Australia (15.6 cases per 100,000 people) as is the highest rate for Multiple Myeloma (6.0 cases per 100,000 people).

Table 2: Summary of cancer incidence projections for Australia 2002-2011¹
(note: data excludes MPS, MPDs, AA, AL and HL)

Year	All haematological cancers	All non-Hodgkin lymphomas	All leukaemias
2002	8030	3734	2617
2003	8262	3851	2677
2004	8504	3970	2740
2005	8748	4091	2802
2006	9003	4217	2869
2007	9264	4345	2936
2008	9524	4472	3003
2009	9792	4603	3070
2010	10063	4734	3138
2011	10347	4871	3210
% increase 2002-2011	28.5	30.5	21.5

Table 3: Trends in 5 year survival for HL, NHL and leukaemias from 1982 – 2004 showing steadily improving survival (%) of Australians with these cancersⁱⁱ.

Cancer	1982 – 1986	1987 – 1991	1992 – 1997	1998 - 2004
HL	72	77	83	85
NHL	47	50	53	62
All leukaemia	37	43	43	49

**For further information or support, please contact the Foundation:
1800 620 420 or www.leukaemia.org.au**

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ⁱ Cancer incidence projections for Australia 2002-2011 – AIHW (2005)

ⁱⁱ Cancer Survival and prevalence in Australia – Cancers diagnosed from 1982 to 2004 –AIHW and AACR (2008)

ⁱⁱⁱ Cancer in Australia –An Overview, AIHW (2006)

^{iv} Cancer in Australia 2000, AIHW and AACR (2003)

^{vi} Cancer Data cubes 2003, AIHW website