



PANCREATIC CANCER FACTS 2008

Pancreatic Cancer - still the deadliest after all these years

- The American Cancer Society's recently released report on cancer statistics states that **pancreatic cancer is one of the few cancers for which survival has not improved substantially over the past 25 years.**
- **75%** of pancreatic cancer patients die within the first year of their diagnosis and only 5% survive more than 5 years.
- **Pancreatic cancer is the 4th leading cause of cancer death in the United States** (lung, breast, and colon cancer are 1st, 2nd, and 3rd; prostate cancer is 5th). Pancreatic cancer is the 3rd leading cause of cancer death among 40-59 year old men.
- In 2007, an estimated **37,170 Americans were diagnosed** with pancreatic cancer and **33,370 died** from the disease.
- The number of people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and the number of deaths caused by pancreatic cancer are going up – not down. These numbers are up 3,800 and 1,070 respectively from 2006.
- Men are 20% more likely to get pancreatic cancer than women and the majority of cases occur in people over the age of 65. The incidence rate among African-Americans is 40 to 50% higher than other ethnic groups.

Scientific Research is in the basic stages

From a scientific research perspective, pancreatic cancer is where breast cancer was in the 1930s. By the 1930s, rudimentary surgical methods to remove early breast and pancreatic cancer tumors had been developed. However, while mammography was developed by the 1950s, and many effective breast cancer treatments have followed, similar tools for pancreatic cancer still do not exist. **Advancing pancreatic cancer research into the 21st century is dependent upon the increase of basic science research.**

Little is Known about prevention methods

Pancreatic cancer risk factors need to be identified and verified before research about prevention methods can begin. Recent research studies indicate that approximately 10% of pancreatic cancer cases are familial and another 30% are thought to result from cigarette smoking. Some of the other risk factors scientists are currently studying include: diabetes, chronic and hereditary pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas), obesity, physical activity, and diet.

There are NO Early Detection Methods

Many patients finally receive the diagnosis of pancreatic cancer when they seek medical attention for jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes). Jaundice typically occurs as a result of the pancreatic tumor growing large enough to block the bile duct. Often, the disease is too advanced at this point to treat successfully.