In order to compare the burden of cancer incidence in Asia, we abstracted the crude incidence rate from the Cancer Incidence in Five Continents Vol. IX (CI5 IX). The CI5 databases provide access to detailed information on the incidence of cancer recorded by cancer registries (regional and national) worldwide. We used crude incidence rate by cancer sites in 1998–2002 in Turkey from CI5 IX and in 2002 in Japan, China, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and India from the CI5plus database which contains the annual incidence for selected cancer registries published in CI5 for the longest possible period. Three registries (Miyagi, Osaka and Yamagata), two registries (Hong Kong and Shanghai), one registry (Manila), one registry (Chiang Mai), two registries (Chinese and Malay), two registries (Chennai and Mumbai) and one registry (Izmir) represent the respective cancer incidence in Japan, China, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, India and Turkey. We selected five cancer sites with the highest incidence rate in each country and compared the difference between the sites and the distribution of cancer burden.

Figure 1 shows the burden of cancer incidence ranking highest for males; Fig. 2 shows these data for females.

For males, in three countries (Japan, China and Turkey) the burden of incidence at five major primary sites accounts for >50% of the total cancer. Lung cancer was the most common form of cancer in most of the countries, except for Japan and India. In Japan, lung cancer was placed second, stomach cancer first. In contrast, the most common in India was oral cavity and pharynx cancer. Liver cancer was the second most frequent in China, Philippines and Thailand, the third most frequent in Singapore (Chinese and Malay) and the fourth most frequent in Japan. Colon cancer ranked high in five countries/registry: Japan, China, Philippines, Chinese in Singapore, and India.

For females, in most of the countries the burden of incidence at five major primary sites accounts for >50% of the total cancer, except for China and Turkey (48.1 and 47.1%, respectively). Breast cancer was the most frequent cancer in each country to a varying proportion (14.2% in Japan, to 28.6% in Turkey), except for Thailand. Cervix uteri cancer was the primary most frequent in Thailand and the second most frequent in Philippines and India. Lung cancer ranked high in most of the countries, except for India. Colon cancer ranked high in five countries: Japan, China, Thailand, Singapore (Chinese and Malay) and Turkey.

Note: Data were downloaded from the IARC CANCER Mondial Statistical Information System (http://www-dep.iarc.fr/). Responsibility for this presentation and interpretation lies with the authors of this article.

Hiroko Yako-Suketomo1 and Kota Katanoda2

1Medical Support and Partnership Division, Center for Cancer Control and Information Services, National Cancer Center
2Surveillance Division, Center for Cancer Control and Information Services, National Cancer Center, Tokyo, Japan
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