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Cancer patient survival by socioeconomic status in seven countries: a review for six common cancer sites

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Abstract

Study objective - To study the size and consistency of socioeconomic differences in cancer patient survival as reported in published studies.

Methods - A systematic review was conducted. Several criteria were developed to select the study material, which resulted in 14 reports on socioeconomic differences in survival for cancers of the colon, rectum, lung, prostate, breast, and cervix. These present results on patients from the United States, Japan, Australia, United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland, and Germany. The results are summarised in a relative risk of dying or survival ratio for

the lowest socioeconomic status group compared with the highest.

Results - For cancers of the colon, rectum, breast, and cervix, patients from higher socioeconomic status groups had a better survival. For lung cancer and cancer of the prostate, results were unclear.

Conclusion - Socioeconomic differences in cancer survival are generally small and their contribution to socioeconomic differences in cancer mortality is probably small too. These findings have implications for the type of health policy measures which should be taken to reduce socioeconomic differences in cancer mortality.

Corrigendum: An article was published in the October issue entitled "Cancer patient survival by socioeconomic status in The Netherlands: a review for six common cancer sites" (*J Epidemiol Community Health* 1994; 48: 441-6). This title was incorrect and misleading. The corrected title is printed above, together with the abstract.