

SURVIVAL PATTERNS OF CANCER PATIENTS IN SRI LANKA

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The study of survival patterns of cancer patients is an extremely important aspect in understanding the hazardous impact of cancer on human life. While such studies can be used as evaluatory measures of the therapeutic treatments available, this information is also useful in planning action for the prevention and control of cancer in the community.

Various methods and measures of patient survival are discussed in this paper. Specially the construction of life tables from incomplete followup information and computation of 5-year survival rates for different cancers are discussed. Secondly, estimating the loss of life and proportional loss of life due to cancer is also discussed. The stage of tumour at diagnosis and the primary site of tumour are two major determinants of survival. But due to the nonavailability of information about the stage of tumour at diagnosis, only the primary site of tumour is used as the major classifying factor. Survival behaviour of three age groups was considered separately to see how the age factor contributes in regulating survival patterns.

Data for discussion was obtained from a continuous followup study, which commenced in 1979 as a part of the hospital Cancer Registry, maintained by the National Cancer Control Programme of the Ministry of Health.

Since Cancer is a long term disease, it requires at least 1 year of followup to calculate the 5-year survival rates with reasonable accuracy. But due to various unavoidable reasons a considerable number of patients have been lost (withdrawn) to the followup study before completing it's second year. The information is incomplete due to this reason. Handling of such incomplete information in the life table method was especially focussed on.

References:

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