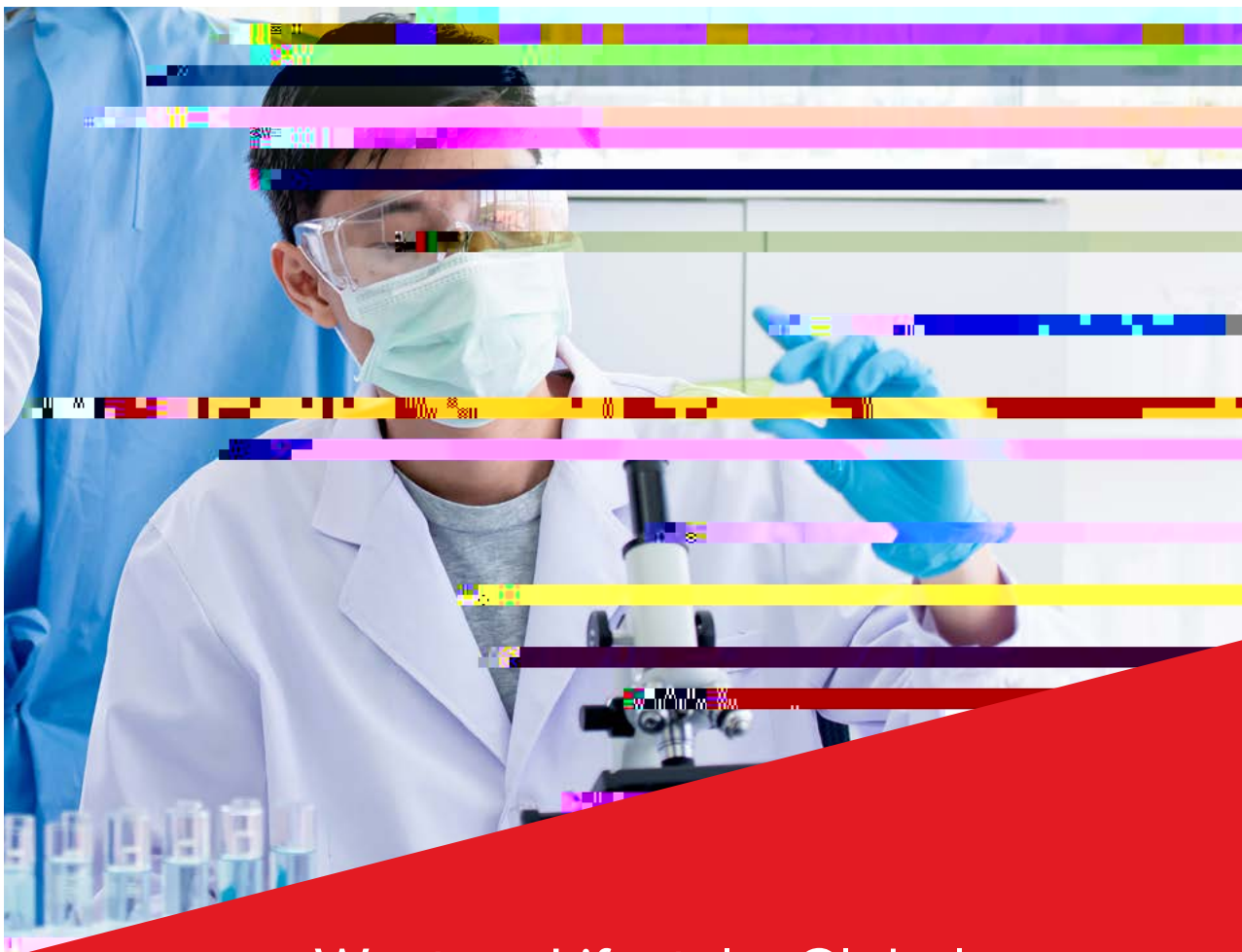




Western Lifestyle, Global Problem: Rising Rates of Cancer in the Young

Hilary Henly
Head of Underwriting Ireland
Director, Divisional Underwriting Research

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Rising rates of early onset cancer in those aged under 50

The cause of rising incidence rates of cancer in adolescents and young adults is unknown, but research suggests that it relates to the increasing prevalence of obesity, the consumption of a Westernized diet and leading a sedentary lifestyle

In 2018, there were an estimated 1.2 million cancer cases and 400,000 cancer-related deaths globally in the 15 to 39 years old age group.¹ The increasing incidence of early-onset cancer in those aged under 50 is of real concern and affects all aspects of insurance, from product development and pricing, to underwriting and claims. If today's adolescents and young adults do not change their lifestyles, the impact on rising cancer rates will be greater than ever before.

Why the rising rates?

While tobacco use is a widely known risk factor for cancer, environmental changes, eating habits, sedentary lifestyles, and subsequent rising obesity rates are all impacting rates of cancer in adolescents and young adults.² Diets rich in animal fat and processed meats and lack of physical activity – and the obesity that results – are shifting the burden of cancer to younger age groups. (Learn more about the prevalence of obesity in the article, "[Obesity: A Silent Pandemic](#).") The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has identified that overweight and obesity are associated with 13 types of cancer: breast, colon and rectal, esophageal, gallbladder, kidney, liver, meningioma, multiple myeloma, ovarian, pancreatic, stomach, and uterine cancer.³ Rising rates of female breast cancer are also being driven by changes in reproductive

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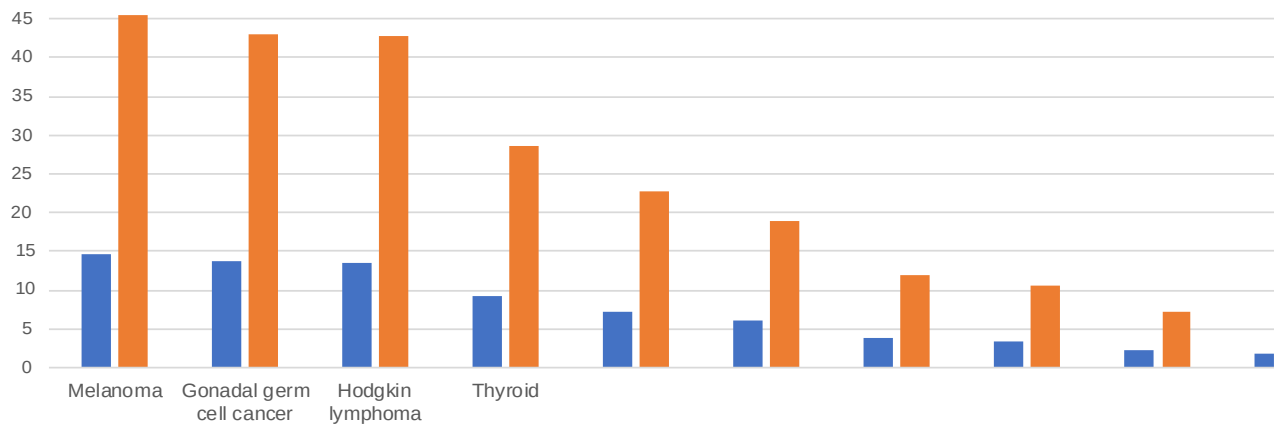
In South Korea, the number of adults in their 20s being treated for breast, cervical, colorectal, liver, and

An analysis of cancer rates in young adults in the U.S. showed that the risk of cancer increased for six of 12 obesity-related cancers between 1995 and 2014. The most diagnosed cancers in the 20- to 29-year-old age group are thyroid, testicular germ cell, and skin melanoma, with breast, thyroid, and melanoma being most common in females.⁴ These figures largely reflect data from a recently published paper on trends in cancer incidence in U.S. adolescents and young adults from 1973 to 2015, which reported that among male patients aged 15 to 39 years, cancer sites with the greatest annual percentage change (APC) increase in incidence were carcinoma of the kidney (APC 3.6%), unspecified soft tissue sarcoma (APC 2.5%), and thyroid carcinoma (APC 2.3%). In women the sites were carcinoma of the kidney (APC 3.6%), thyroid cancer (APC 3.5%), and myeloma, mast cell and miscellaneous lymphoreticular neoplasms (APC 2.8%). Overall, the increase in cancer incidence in this age group increased by 29.6% from 1973 to 2015.⁹

Figure 3: Relation of obesity-associated cancers to young adult malignancies in the U.S., 2016 ¹⁰

In the U.S., CRC incidence in adults aged 20 to 49 years rose by 2.67% per annum from 2012 to 2016.

Figure 6: The top 10 commonly diagnosed cancers in Australia, age 15-24 years, 2010-2014²⁴



Appendix

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