Letter of the Editor

Cancer: The Future features in Iran

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Today, cancer is the main reason of the 12 % of mortality around the world. It is the second most important reason of death in the developed countries and the third most important one in the developing countries. The frequency of cancer cases in the developed countries is much higher than that of the developing countries, but statistics signify that the rate of cancer incidence is increasing faster in the developing countries and it is predicted that in the oncoming decades, there will be more fluctuations in the frequency and incidence within these two poles of world countries; put another way, the developed countries will be supplanted by the developing ones. Considering this rate, there will be 15 million cases of cancer in 2020, 6 million (40%) of whom in the developed countries and 9 million (60%) of whom in the developing ones(1). Comparing the statistics, we will clearly feel the imminent danger: unbeknown to us, the cancer is spreading fast. The annual statistics show that incidence is increasing in our country according to the epidemiological transition, change in the appearance of diseases, and the lifestyle. Each year, 90000 cases are recorded in our country; it is forecast that this number will amount to 154000 cases in the next 15 years (70% increase)(2). Currently, 205 out of 100000 men and 164 out of 100000 women contract cancer in the developed countries. In Iran, this number is as follows 134 out of 100000 for men and 128 out of 100000 for women, namely there is a 60 or 70 out of 100000 distance between the cancer incidence in Iran and that of the developed countries. In Iran, the rate of death to cancer incidence is 73% in a year, while the global average is 58 % and the average in the developed countries goes less than 50%. This high number, accompanied by exorbitant treatment expenditure, shows that there is not a well-established approach in Iran for planning and taking actions with regard to cancer. Generally, the change in lifestyle like smoking tobacco, wrong diet patterns, low amount of fruit and vegetable consumption, change in the pattern of using salt and sugar, inadequate physical activity, obesity, increase in blood pressure, stresses, genetically hazardous factors, environmental risk factors, past records on contracting several diseases are conducive to cancer and it seems that lifestyle is the first on this list(3). The number of cancer cases will grow in Iran, considering dangers and the improvement of life expectancy and longevity in the future. It is noteworthy that half of the cancers are preventable and the other half curable if diagnosed early. Identifying the reasons of cancer and considering the current bulging situation, interventionist measures should be taken in 15-20 years based on society and assisted by people and inter-departmental cooperation. Capabilities, planning, training the experts, providing the equipment and the required drugs must be done so that there will not be an excess in the cancer incidence and its treatment will also be more at hand.

References

1. World cancer report, An IARC publication, distributed by WHO
2. The report of registering cancer cases issued by IRI ministry of health
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