

'Cancer will barely exist by 2050'

By [Laura Donnelly](#)

30 Jan 2015

Cancer will kill almost no one under the age of 80 by 2050 due to continued advances in preventing and treating the disease, a major study has suggested.



© Gelpi - Fotolia.com

The research by University College London was published as experts said a daily low-dose aspirin is the single most effective action to protect against cancer.

Professor Jack Cuzick, who leads research into disease prevention, urged GPs to do more to ensure patients were given advice to take "baby aspirin" for a decade between the ages of 50 and 65.

He cited research showing that such action reduces the chance of cancer, heart attacks and strokes by between 7% and 9% in 15 years and cuts overall death rates by 4% in two decades.

The new study by University College London suggested that on current trends, by 2050 cancer will rarely kill anyone under the age of 80.

Dramatic improvement in cancer death rates in the UK in the last 20 years means that half of those who die from the disease are over the age of 75, researchers said.

Author David Taylor, UCL Emeritus Professor of Pharmaceutical and Public Health Policy, said within decades it would become rare for cancer to kill those in middle age.

"This is a projection of what is already happening," he said.

"Overall age-standardised cancer deaths are down 20% since about 1990. What makes this a special point in history is that cancers are in the process of becoming either preventable or effectively curable," he said.

Taylor said with the right positive actions, such as wider uptake of aspirin and more sophisticated tracking of prostate cancer, improvements could accelerate further.

The report said: "It is realistic to expect by 2050 nearly all cancer related deaths in children and adults aged up to (say) 80 years will have become preventable through lifestyle changes and because of the availability of protective technologies and better pharmaceutical and other therapies."

Cuzick, director of the Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine, said not smoking and not putting on too much weight were both effective ways to reduce the chance of cancer, but taking a daily 75mg aspirin was the best positive step to lower risk of the disease.

Experts have argued over the benefits of aspirin versus its risks because the drug can increase the risk of stomach bleeding and ulcers. But Cuzick said the recent study found that aspirin saved 17 lives for each death caused.

Anyone at high risk of bleeding should talk to their GP first, experts said, including those on blood thinning drugs, those with diabetes and smokers.

Cancer experts said preventing cancer and diagnosing it early was crucial to improvements.

But, at the launch of the report yesterday, leading researchers and representatives from the pharmaceutical industry expressed anger at the English National Health Service decision to withdraw funding for 25 life-extending cancer treatments.

About 8000 patients a year suffering from breast, bowel and prostate cancer will be denied NHS drugs that could extend their survival under plans to limit spending by the Cancer Drugs Fund.

Paul Catchpole, from the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry, said the decision by NHS England to strike 25 treatments off the list of those it funds was "crude and rushed" and would devastate patients.

Source: The Times via I-net Bridge

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>