

Cervical Cancer among First Nations in Alberta

Age-standardized cervical cancer incidence rates by First Nations status; 2006-2015

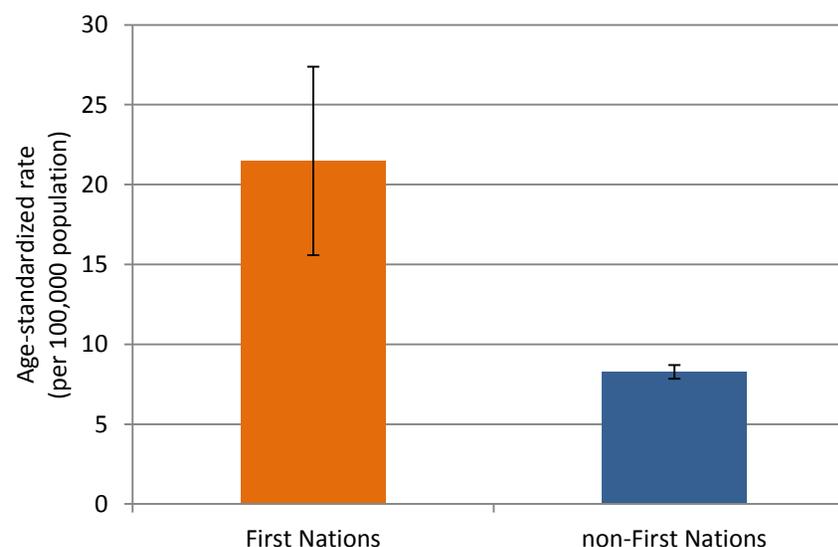
Globally, cervical cancer is a major burden of disease. In 2012, there were an estimated half million cases diagnosed worldwide, making cervical cancer the fourth most common cancer among women globally.¹ In a previous *First Nations – Health Trends Alberta*,² we compared the top ten cancers observed among First Nations and non-First Nations populations in Alberta between 2006 and 2015 for both sexes combined: among First Nations, but not among non-First Nations, cervical cancer was ranked within the top ten types of cancer observed. Here³ we describe the extent of this disparity by presenting age-standardized incidence rates for First Nations and non-First Nations women in Alberta separately.

Cervical cancer incidence rates 2.6 times higher among First Nations compared to non-First Nations women

Between 2006 and 2015, there was an annual average of 155 cases of cervical cancer diagnosed in Alberta (10 among First Nations; 145 among non-First Nations). Over this time period, the average age-standardized incidence rate among First Nations women was 2.6 times higher compared to the rate among their non-First Nations counterparts (21.5 versus 8.3 per 100,000 population, respectively).

For both populations, age-specific rates began to rise around 20 to 29 years of age. However, a larger proportion of cases were diagnosed among younger First Nations women: almost three quarters of cases (72 percent) were diagnosed among First Nations women between the ages of 25 and 49 years, compared to 59 percent of total cases among non-First Nations women.

Cervical cancer can be prevented through cancer control strategies. These include vaccination for human papillomavirus (HPV), a known risk factor for cervical cancer. Regular screening through Pap tests is also helpful in preventing cervical cancer. A Pap test can detect abnormal conditions that may be treated before cancer develops. For more information, visit: <http://screeningforlife.ca>.



¹ http://globocan.iarc.fr/Pages/fact_sheets_cancer.aspx

² <http://www.afnigc.ca/main/includes/media/pdf/fnhta/HTAFN-2017-10-31-TopCancerSites.pdf>

³ This is the 25th in a series of First Nations-specific Health Trends compiled in collaboration by Alberta Health and the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre (AFNIGC). To suggest future topics, please contact the AFNIGC (communications@afnigc.ca; 403-539-5775).