Recent trends of cancer mortality in Romanian adults: mortality is still increasing, although young adults do better than the middle-aged and elderly population.

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Abstract
We analysed the mortality trends (1986-2009) for all cancers combined and selected cancers in adult Romanians by three age groups (15-49, 50-69 and older than 70 years of age) in comparison with 11 other European countries. We extracted mortality data from the WHO database and grouped the countries into four regions: central and eastern Europe (Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary), Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), western and northern Europe (Austria, the Netherlands and Finland), and southern Europe (Croatia and Slovenia). Mortality rates were age-standardized against the standard European population. Significant changes in mortality trends were identified by Joinpoint regression and annual percentage changes (APCs) were calculated for periods with uniform trends. Cancer mortality in Romania was among the lowest in Europe in 1986, but was higher than most countries by 2009. Despite the declining mortality (APC) in younger Romanians for all cancers combined (men-1.5% from 1997, women-1.2% 1997-2004 and -3.8% 2004-2009), male lung cancer (-2.8% from 1997), female breast (-3.5% from 1999) and cervical (-5.4% from 2004) cancers, mortality has increased in middle-aged and elderly patients for most cancers analysed. The exception was declining stomach cancer mortality in most Romanians, except elderly men. For most cancers analysed, mortality declined in the Baltic countries in young and middle-aged patients, and in western and northern countries for all ages. Lung cancer mortality in women increased in all countries except Latvia. We urge immediate steps to reverse the alarming increase in cancer mortality among middle-aged and elderly Romanians.