

Cancer in Cuban Women: Key Points

Vital Statistics and Social Indicators

- There are more than a million Cuban Americans, comprising about 0.4 percent of the U.S. population and 4.7 percent of all Hispanics in the United States.
- There are about 436,000 Cuban adult women (aged 20 and older) in the United States.
- Compared to U.S. women overall, Cuban women are older, have fewer children, and have lower infant mortality rates.
- Compared to other Hispanic ethnic subgroups, Cuban women are better educated, have better health, have lower mortality rates, and are more likely to have health insurance and a regular source of health care

Cancer Rates, Mortality, and Risk Factors

- The most common cancer sites among Cuban women reported in 11 SEER (Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results) registries from 1992 to 1997 were: breast, colorectal, lung, and uterus.
- Cuban women with cancer tend to be older when diagnosed than U.S. White women overall, and tend to be diagnosed at similar (not later) stages.
- Cuban women smoke more than White women but less than most Hispanics, and their use of alcohol is relatively low.
- Recent data suggest that Cuban women use preventive services, including mammograms and Pap smears, at rates higher than other Hispanic subgroups.

Data Limitations and Future Directions

- There is no single source of reliable data on cancer rates, mortality and survival for Cuban women; findings are reported for a combination of sources in southern Florida and from SEER registries elsewhere in the country
- It is difficult to accurately describe cancer incidence and mortality among Cuban women, due to the limitations of data sources and unknown age-specific denominators.
- Cuban women appear to have different, more favorable, health profiles than other Hispanic ethnic subgroups; however, this situation and contributing factors need to be better defined.
- There is a need to track and better understand the cancer risks and experience of Cuban women over time, in various locations, and across generations of immigration.