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STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING CANCER

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Cancer incidence and mortality rates are rising drastically around the world prevailing types of cancer being those of the lung, breast, prostate, and colorectum. In the Republic of Belarus there is also a tendency to the growth in the number of cancer patients – over the past 10 years their number has increased by 21%. In Belarus more than 42 thousand people are diagnosed with cancer every year.

Thereby, the task of cancer prevention and early diagnosing is the top priority for numerous research organizations worldwide. Considerable attention has been given to a series of hypotheses concerning the influence of prolonged excessive exposure to sun during peak hours, dietary changes (including micronutrients, macronutrients and non-nutritive chemical elements), total energy intake and obesity, alcohol consumption, tobacco smoking, and their influence on the increase/ decrease of cancer risks. Though certain factors crucial for malignancy development such as genetic cancer susceptibility cannot be eliminated the risk of some types of cancer can be reduced to a significant extent. It is estimated that 80 to 90 percent of all cancer cases are related to environmental and lifestyle influences. Therefore, researchers consider that 80 to 90 percent of human cancers are preventable. Since tobacco-related cancers account for about 30 percent of all fatal forms of cancer, smoking cessation is an important area for continued education and prevention efforts.

Cancer prevention activities should target all categories of population and represent a combination of all possible strategies for the given geographical, social and ethnic environment. The focus of cancer prevention should be based on the routine use of combination of preventive strategies. Improvement of public knowledge and understanding of cancer prevention and screening, behavioral modification and dietary changes are sure to contribute to better health outcomes.