

# Caveat on use of 2021 NSW preliminary cancer incidence data

## Date updated

20 July 2023

## Data set

NSW Cancer Registry (NSWCR) - 2021 NSW preliminary cancer incidence data

## Data element

All data elements

## Definition of data element

N/A

## Caveat 1 – Missing Death Certificate Only (DCO) cancer cases

Data for 2021 cancer incidence in the 2021 NSW preliminary cancer incidence release are incomplete due to missing “Death Certificate Only” DCO cancer cases. This release does not contain mortality data for 2021 year of death. Please see details below regarding impacts when using these data for analyses.

## Background

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is the National body responsible for compiling and coding mortality data (including cause of death) from source agencies: Registrars of Birth Deaths and Marriages (RBDM) for each state and territory and the National Coronial Information System.

These data are available through the Australian Coordinating Registry (ACR), and the NSW Cancer Registry receives a Cause of Death Unit Record File (CODURF) as part of its process to code mortality. These data are by year of death registration and are available once a year, usually between May and July. To produce complete mortality for a reporting year, we require receipt of two years of CODURF death registrations.

Cancer cases that are only identified and coded as new cases on receipt of the CODURF data are known as DCO cases.

To provide researchers with the most relevant and up to date cancer information available there are two planned releases of data from the NSWCR for each reporting year, depending on the timing and receipt of the COD URF data:

- **Preliminary cancer incidence data**
  - Incidence data for current reporting year coded, but not complete due to missing DCO cancer cases.
  - Mortality data for current reporting year not available.
- **Final cancer incidence and mortality data**
  - Incidence data coded and complete for current reporting year.
  - Mortality data coded and complete for current reporting year.

## Impact on 2021 cancer incidence counts

As 2021 mortality has not been processed and coded for this release, there is an expected undercount of new invasive primary cancer case of approximately 1.7% of all cancers. This represents the average annual proportion of DCO cases, based on historical final coded incidence and mortality data. This proportion varies by cancer type and age group.

The following tables provide a breakdown of the proportion of DCO cancer cases identified from death information over the five-year period from 2016 to 2020, by cancer type (ICD-9) and five-year age group. Cancer of unknown primary and age at diagnosis over 85 are most impacted by missing DCO cases, with approximately 17.6% (Table 1a) and 10.6% (Table 1b) of cases identified from coding death data respectively.

**Table 1a: Proportion of NSW DCO cancer cases, by cancer type (ICD-9), 2016–2020**

Code	Cancer type (ICD-9) Description	Number of DCO cases (#)	Proportion of DCO cases (%)
C910	Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia	0	0.0%
C920	Acute myeloid leukaemia	20	1.1%
C67	Bladder	138	2.9%
C401	Bone	5	1.2%
C71	Brain	65	2.2%
C50	Breast	173	0.6%
C98	Cancer unknown primary	949	17.6%
C72	Central nervous system	2	1.1%
C53	Cervical	5	0.4%

Code	Cancer type (ICD-9) Description	Number of DCO cases (#)	Proportion of DCO cases (%)
C18	Colon	158	0.9%
C479	Connective tissue, peripheral nerve	7	0.6%
C69	Eye	0	0.0%
C234	Gallbladder	40	2.1%
C81	Hodgkin lymphoma	0	0.0%
C123	Hypopharyngeal	2	0.7%
C46	Kaposi's sarcoma	0	0.0%
C648	Kidney	141	2.0%
C32	Laryngeal	11	1.1%
C00	Lip	1	0.1%
C22	Liver	203	4.7%
C334	Lung	625	3.0%
C43	Melanoma of skin	24	0.1%
C45	Mesothelioma	35	2.7%
C036	Mouth	12	1.0%
C8890	Multiple myeloma	62	1.7%
M96	Myelodysplasia	102	3.8%
C301	Nasal & sinus	4	1.2%
C11	Nasopharyngeal	5	1.6%
C82	Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	81	0.8%
C15	Oesophageal	49	1.9%
C0910	Oropharyngeal	7	0.6%
C745	Other endocrine gland	4	1.4%
C59	Other female genital	15	1.7%
M95	Other lymphatic haematopoietic	64	2.3%
C919	Other lymphoid leukaemia	23	0.7%
C6360	Other male genital	4	1.4%
C929	Other myeloid leukaemia	9	0.7%
C14	Other oral cavity & pharyngeal	11	13.3%
C94	Other specified leukaemia	0	0.0%

Code	Cancer type (ICD-9) Description	Number of DCO cases (#)	Proportion of DCO cases (%)
C378	Other thoracic	9	3.3%
C567	Ovarian	47	1.7%
C25	Pancreatic	321	5.2%
C58	Placental	0	0.0%
C61	Prostate	300	0.9%
C1921	Rectal	93	1.0%
C078	Salivary gland	6	1.1%
C17	Small intestinal	9	0.8%
C16	Stomach	64	1.6%
C62	Testicular	2	0.1%
C73	Thyroid	11	0.2%
C012	Tongue	22	1.3%
C95	Unspecified leukaemia	114	54.3%
C545	Uterine	31	0.7%
<b>All cancer cases</b>		<b>4,085</b>	<b>1.7%</b>

**Table 2: Proportion of NSW DCO cancer cases, by five-year age group at diagnosis, 2016–2020**

Five-year age group	Number of DCO cases (#)	Proportion of DCO cases (%)
0-4 years	1	0.2%
5-9 years	0	0.0%
10-14 years	0	0.0%
15-19 years	0	0.0%
20-24 years	2	0.2%
25-29 years	1	0.1%
30-34 years	1	0.0%
35-39 years	3	0.1%
40-44 years	7	0.1%
45-49 years	14	0.1%
50-54 years	23	0.2%

Five-year age group	Number of DCO cases (#)	Proportion of DCO cases (%)
55-59 years	69	0.3%
60-64 years	91	0.3%
65-69 years	150	0.4%
70-74 years	258	0.7%
75-79 years	364	1.3%
80-84 years	648	2.9%
85+ years	2,453	10.6%
<b>All cancer cases</b>	<b>4,085</b>	<b>1.6%</b>

## For more information contact

Data Access and Research Liaison Service team: [CINSW-DARenquiries@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:CINSW-DARenquiries@health.nsw.gov.au)

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