

# **ESTIMATING COMPLETENESS IN CANCER REGISTRIES IN EUROPE: A SURVEY PROMOTED BY THE EUROCOURSE PROJECT**

Lidia Sacchetto (Piedmont Cancer Registry, CPO, Turin, Italy); Irene Schmidtman (Institute of Medical Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Informatics, University of Mainz, Mainz, Germany); Stefano Rosso (Piedmont Cancer Registry, CPO, Turin, Italy); Roberto Zanetti (Piedmont Cancer Registry, CPO, Turin, Italy) on behalf of the EUROCOURSE WP3 Working Group on Completeness and Timeliness

## **Introduction**

Completeness of registration is the first and principal test for a cancer registry (CR) to pass: only a complete registration can produce incidence rates and statistics close to their true values.

## **Objectives**

Inside the EUROCOURSE project, a WP3 Working Group decided to examine methods currently used by European cancer registries to estimate their completeness.

## **Materials and Methods**

A survey has been performed, updating and extending a previous one. The questionnaire, sent to 179 CRs, was structured in different sections: description of the registry, availability and current practices of collection of information, inquiry on completeness and timeliness of data publication.

We computed relative and absolute frequencies and displayed results in tables and graphs.

## **Results**

116 CRs (64.8%) returned us the questionnaire, with total population coverage of more than 280 millions, from 32 different countries.

88% of CRs affirmed to check completeness and to have a very high completeness (above 95%) in the 62% of cases. The most common method used is historical comparison of rates (79%); complex methods, which allowed for quantitative evaluation of incompleteness, are less popular and, in particular, only 18 CRs use the flow method.

Regional differences in the use of methods are small.

Concerning timeliness, latencies for publishing data and for sending them to international databases seem quite short; moreover there is no significant association between measuring completeness with quantitative methods and publishing data sooner.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

Our results confirm, in a larger and more updated sample, those from the previous survey.

The proportion of CRs that currently evaluate their completeness is still high; the methods used are at large those based on simple comparisons; the use of quantitative methods, even if is slightly increasing, has not yet become prevalent. There is the need, for the CRs, of disseminating quantitative methods.