Trends in net survival from pancreatic cancer in six European Latin countries: results from the SUDCANC study
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Pancreatic cancer represents a real clinical challenge. The aim of the SUDCANC collaborative study was to compare the net survival from pancreatic cancer between six European Latin countries (Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland) and provide trends in net survival and dynamics of excess mortality rates up to 5 years after diagnosis. The data were extracted from the EUROCARE-5 database. First, net survival was studied over the period 2000–2004 using the Pohar-Perme estimator. For trend analyses, the study period was specific to each country. Results were reported from 1992 to 2004 in France, Italy, Spain and Switzerland and from 2000 to 2004 in Belgium and Portugal. These analyses were carried out using a flexible excess rate modelling strategy. There were little differences between countries in age-standardized net survivals (2000–2004). The 5-year net survival was poor (range: 6–10%). The changes in net survival from 1992 to 2004 were mostly related to early survival and patients aged 60 years. A slight decrease in the excess mortality rate between 1992 and 2004 was observed, limited to the 18 months after diagnosis. This study confirmed that, despite some improvement, survival from pancreatic cancer is still poor throughout European Latin countries. The major improvements in clinical imaging did not result in improvements in prognosis. Development of truly innovative treatments is highly needed to improve prognosis. European Journal of Cancer Prevention 25: S63–S69 Copyright © 2016 Wolters Kluwer Health, Inc. All rights reserved.


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Introduction
Pancreatic cancer is a major challenge in oncology and is currently the focus among clinicians and epidemiologists. The incidence patterns of pancreatic cancer differ from one area to another (Karim-Kos et al., 2008; Bouvier et al., 2010; Underwood et al., 2015). In some countries (Northern Europe, South America, Asia and Africa), there have either been no major changes or slight decreases in incidence, whereas it has been increasing slowly in North America and Southern Europe (Italy or Spain), but more rapidly in France. The burden of pancreatic cancer may therefore increase in the future. Despite advances in the diagnostic procedures over the last three decades, few changes have occurred in the management of patients (David et al., 2009). Studies that compare survivals and survival trends between different European countries are thus required.

Within this context, recent developments have occurred in cancer survival analysis. The SUDCANC study aims to compare cancer net survivals between Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland. In these six Latin countries, in 2012, the number of new pancreatic cancer cases was estimated at 29,894 and the number of related deaths at 29,889; the age-standardized (world) incidence and mortality rates ranged from 5 to 6.9 and from 4.9 to 6.5 per 100,000 person-years, respectively (Ferlay et al., 2013). The European mean age-standardized 5-year relative survival for pancreatic cancer in EUROCARE-5 study was 6.9% (De Angelis et al., 2014).

For meaningful survival comparisons between countries or time periods, a reliable indicator is needed. Net survival from cancer is the survival that would be observed if cancer were the only cause of death. This major