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Tobacco Leading Cause of Preventable Death, Disease, CDC Says

A new study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that 2.4 million tobacco-related cancers were diagnosed between 1999 and 2004, making tobacco the leading preventable cause of disease and premature death in the United States, *AHA News Now* reports. Based on an analysis of data obtained from national cancer registries, the report offers "convincing evidence for a direct causal relationship" between tobacco use and lung, laryngeal, oral cavity, esophageal, stomach, pancreatic, kidney, bladder and cervical cancers, as well as acute myelogenous leukemia, according to the CDC. Tobacco-related cancer diagnoses were most prevalent among men, African-American and non-Hispanic populations and older adults. In addition, southern U.S. states, which tend to have higher smoking rates, reported higher rates of lung and laryngeal cancer than states in other regions. The researchers say the findings underscore the need for ongoing surveillance of cancer trends and should help officials shape tobacco control programs and policies. The director of the CDC's Office of Smoking and Health notes that, "if proven strategies were fully implemented to decrease tobacco use, much of the suffering and death that cancer inflicts on families and communities could be prevented." (*AHA News Now*, 9/5/08; Center for Disease Control and Prevention [report](#), 9/5/08).