



Understanding Bile Duct Cancer

Bile ducts are thin tubes, which bile moves from the liver to the small intestine to help digest the fats in food. Bile duct cancer can occur at younger ages, but the average age of diagnosis is 70 for intrahepatic bile duct cancer, and 72 for extrahepatic bile duct cancer.

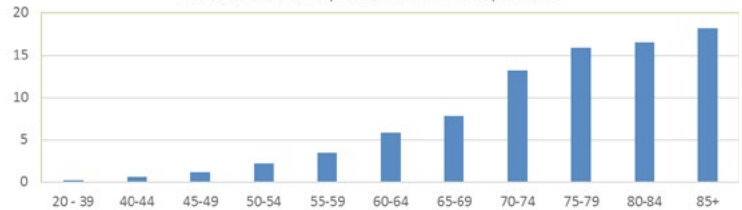
Nearly all bile duct cancers are cholangiocarcinomas. Other types of bile duct cancers are much less common. These include sarcomas, lymphomas, and small cell cancers.

Treatment for bile duct cancer may include surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. Some unresectable bile duct cancers have been treated by removing the liver and bile ducts and then transplanting a donor liver. In some cases it may even cure the cancer. Researchers continue to develop drugs that target specific parts of cancer cells or their surrounding environments.

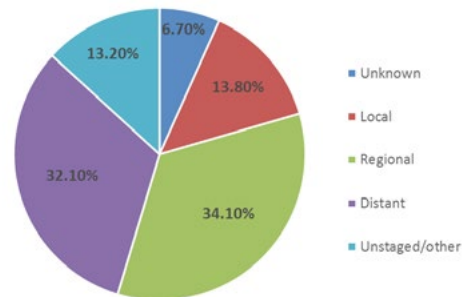
Key Facts

- About 8,000 people in the United States are diagnosed each year with either intrahepatic (inside the liver) or extrahepatic (outside the liver) bile duct cancers, but the actual number may be higher, as the difficulty in diagnosing may cause some to be misclassified as other types of cancer.
- Mortality from bile duct cancer is high, with virtually no survival at five years post-diagnosis. Patients have a better prognosis the farther away from the liver hilum the tumor is located, and according to certain aspects of shape and cell type within the tumor.

BILE DUCT CANCER INCIDENCE RATE (PER 100,000) BY AGE GROUP, VA
DATA SOURCE: INCIDENCE, VIRGINIA CANCER REGISTRY, 2005-2014

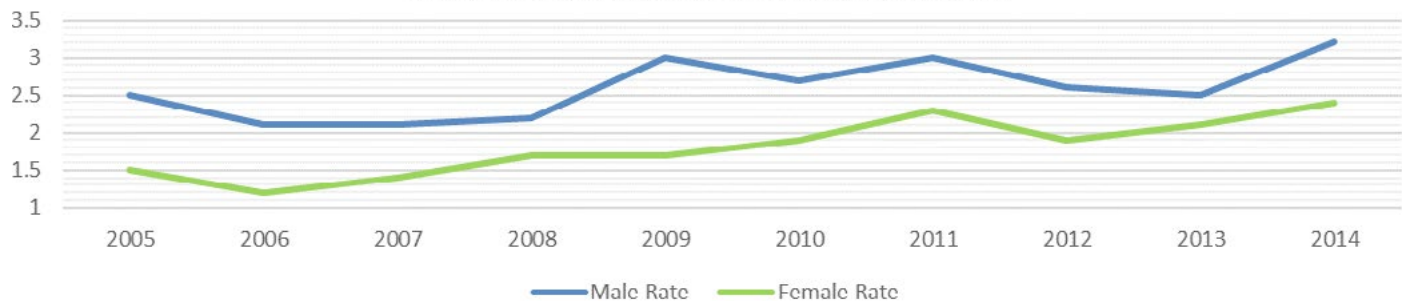


Percentage of Bile Duct Cancer Cases by Stage, VA
Data Source: Virginia Cancer Registry 2010-2014





BILE DUCT CANCER INCIDENCE RATE (PER 100,000) BY SEX, VA
DATA SOURCE: INCIDENCE, VIRGINIA CANCER REGISTRY, 2005-2014



Frequently Asked Questions

What are the symptoms of bile duct cancer?

Symptoms do not appear in the early stages. The duct is located deep in the body, so early tumors are not easily detected during routine physical exams. A bile duct tumor blocks the flow of bile and bilirubin from the liver to the intestine resulting in jaundice, a yellowing of the skin. The most common and earliest symptoms are related to abnormal liver functions and include weight loss and changes in stool or urine.

What are the risk factors for bile duct cancer?

Chronic inflammation of the bile ducts increases the risk of bile duct cancer. Cirrhosis, hepatitis, primary sclerosing cholangitis and chronic ulcerative colitis are among possible causes of inflammation. Among other risk factors are alcohol use, smoking, obesity, and diabetes.

Why is bile duct cancer more common in Asia?

Bile duct cancer is much more common in Asia because the parasitic infection that can cause bile duct cancer is much more common there. The infection originates in worms, eaten by fish and then consumed by humans. This infection affects an estimated 25 million people in Asia.

Putting a Face on Bile Duct Cancer

Although it is a tragedy losing anyone to cancer, below are some notable names we have lost to bile duct cancer.

Ray Manzarek | Musician | February 12, 1939 – May 20, 2013

Walter Payton | Pro Football Player | July 25, 1954 - November 1, 1999

Tommy Ramone | Musician | January 29, 1949 - July 11, 2014

References

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/bile-duct-cancer.html
2. www.cancer.org/cancer/lung-cancer.html
3. www.cancer.org/cancer/bile-duct-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/risk-factors.html
4. www.cancer.net/cancer-types/bile-duct-cancer-cholangiocarcinoma/risk-factors
5. VA Rate (Incidence): Virginia Cancer Registry. Based on combined 2010-2014 data. Age-adjusted to 2000 U.S. standard population