



Canadian Cancer Research Alliance • Alliance
canadienne pour la recherche sur le cancer

CANADIAN PARTNERSHIP
AGAINST CANCER



PARTENARIAT CANADIEN
CONTRE LE CANCER

Report shows that \$1 of every \$20 invested in cancer research was focused on survivorship and palliative and end-of-life care

Tuesday September 20, 2011 (TORONTO) – The first-ever detailed examination of Canada’s investment in cancer survivorship research and palliative and end-of-life care cancer research was released today by the Canadian Cancer Research Alliance (CCRA) and the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (the Partnership), which is funded by Health Canada. This study found that the investment in these two emerging and related areas of research represented nearly 5% of the overall cancer research investment in Canada, or about \$18.5M annually, for the 2005–2008 period. By comparison, this was roughly half of what was invested in cancer risk and prevention research; the investment in treatment research was nearly five times greater.

“With an estimated 75,000 Canadians dying from cancer in 2011 and nearly 2 million people living with cancer by 2020, research in the areas of cancer survivorship and palliative and end-of-life care is critical,” said Stuart Edmonds, Executive Director of the CCRA and Director of the Research Portfolio at the Partnership. “This important report helps shed light on the scale and scope of research investment at a time when many organizations funding cancer research have recognized the need to augment research in these areas. This gathering and sharing of information and knowledge is a great example of why the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer was created.”

Survivorship research refers to research conducted after primary cancer treatment and it focuses on the long-term or late complications of cancer and its treatments, other physical, practical, and psychological effects experienced by cancer survivors and their family/caregivers, interventions to address quality of life, and issues relevant to delivery and access to appropriate supportive care. Palliative and end-of-life care research refers to research on physical symptoms associated with advanced/metastatic cancer, spiritual, emotional, social support, and care needs of patients with advanced disease and their families, issues of bereavement and grieving as well as quality of death, ethical issues associated with death and dying, and care needs and care delivery.

“Understanding how much and what areas of research are being funded in Canada is vitally important to us as we set our priorities for supporting cancer survivors and palliative and end-of-life care patients,” emphasizes Dr. Margaret Fitch, Chair of the Cancer Journey Advisory Group at the Partnership. “We want to look at ways that we can complement, and enhance the research effort for the ultimate benefit of survivors and palliative and end-of-life care patients. Although there are still many unanswered research questions, we now have a body of research evidence that had never previously existed.”

The study showed that investment in survivorship research rose from \$10.2M in 2005 to \$14.3M in 2008—a net increase of 40% from 2005 to 2008. Research supported by the charitable sector represented 28% of this investment. The largest proportion of the investment (45%, \$6.9M per year) was focused on the identification and management of specific late/long-term physical effects of cancer and its treatment. Among the physical effects being studied were: sexual functioning/reproductive issues, cognitive/neurological issues, fatigue/insomnia, cardiotoxicity/vascular issues, and arm morbidity/lymphedema.

Thirty organizations had some level of investment in survivorship research during the four year period. Combined, the Canadian Institutes of Cancer Research (CIHR) and the Canadian Cancer Society accounted for 59% of the overall average annual investment in survivorship research (their average annual investments being \$4.4M and \$2.7M, respectively). Organizations such as the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation and Alberta Innovates – Health Solutions represented proportionately more of the survivorship research investment when the overall cancer research investment distribution was used for comparison.

Over half (55%) of the average annual investment in survivorship research was focused on specific cancers. For several types of cancer, the distribution of investment in research targeting a given cancer site was similar to or higher than the prevalence (patients still alive after a diagnosis of cancer) for that cancer site. For colorectal, prostate, and bladder cancers, however, the proportion of research investment fell well below the relative prevalence, and there was no investment in survivorship research focused on melanoma or kidney and pancreatic cancers.

While there was a net increase in the funding over the four years covered in the report for palliative and end-of-life care research, the net annual increase in investment in palliative and end-of-life care research was 12%, well below the increased investment gain of 21% for cancer research overall.

While 23 organizations had some level of investment in palliative and end-of-life care research, CIHR was the dominant funder, representing \$4.0M (63%) of the \$6.4M invested annually. Much of this investment (45%) was due to special funding programs spearheaded by CIHR's Institute of Cancer Research that began in 2003. These programs have now ended and the effort is now on how best to build on the research capacity that has been developed in this area.

The investment in palliative and end-of-life care research was focused on two areas: physiological effects (36%) and care delivery, access, and quality (31%). Much of the investment (59%) in research on physiological effects was focused on pain and cachexia/anorexia/chemosensory disturbances.

On a per capita basis, the research investment in both survivorship and palliative and end-of-life care research was highest in Alberta and 16% of the investment in trainee awards went to trainees studying at the province's universities. Principal investigators in Quebec also played a leadership role in terms of training in the areas of survivorship and palliative and end-of-life care research as researchers from McGill University managed two major training programs in the areas of survivorship and palliative and end-of-life care research during the reporting period.

Investment in Research on Survivorship and Palliative and End-of-Life Care, 2005-2008 is a special section of *Cancer Research Investment in Canada, 2008*, an annual survey produced by the CCRA, an alliance of cancer research funding organizations and affiliated partners working together to enhance the overall state of cancer research funding in Canada through improved communication, cooperation and coordination.

"The information generated by the survey is used by research funders to identify gaps in research and formulate ways to address these gaps through a coordinated approach to funding," says Dr. Edmonds. "Since 2008, there has been growing recognition on the part of research funders of the importance of research in the areas of cancer survivorship and palliative and end-of-life care. Now we have the baseline data to assess these recent initiatives and commitments on a go-forward basis."

Canadian Cancer Research Survey

The Canadian Cancer Research Survey is an ongoing activity of the CCRA. The survey database is currently comprised of information on all cancer research projects actively funded in calendar years 2005 to 2008 (9,233 projects in total) by 39 funding organizations/programs. Projects within the database are classified in a variety of ways in order to quantify, describe, and track the cancer research investment. The term “cancer research investment” is used within the CCRA report to represent cancer research projects that received some form of peer review, and were administered by the organizations participating in the survey. The full report and companion PowerPoint presentation is available at the CCRA web site: http://www.ccra-acrc.ca/default_en.htm.

The Canadian Cancer Research Alliance

The Canadian Cancer Research Alliance (CCRA) is comprised of 31 organizations that collectively represent the custodians of the majority of taxpayer dollars and donations devoted to investing in research that will lead to better ways to prevent, diagnose, and treat cancer and improve survivor outcomes. Its membership includes federal research funding programs/agencies, provincial research agencies, provincial cancer care agencies, and national cancer charities. CCRA is motivated by the belief that, through effective collaboration, Canadian cancer research funding organizations can maximize their collective impact on cancer control and accelerate discovery for the ultimate benefit of Canadians affected by cancer. The CCRA Secretariat is funded by the Partnership and the CCRA Board serves as the Partnership’s Research Advisory Group.

The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer

The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer is an independent organization funded by the federal government to accelerate action on cancer control for all Canadians. Bringing together cancer experts, government representatives, the Canadian Cancer Society and cancer patients, survivors and their families to implement the first pan-Canadian cancer control strategy, the vision is to be a driving force to achieve a focused approach that will help prevent cancer, enhance the quality of life of those affected by cancer, lessen the likelihood of dying from cancer, and increase the efficiency of cancer control in Canada. For more information about the Partnership and Canada’s cancer control strategy, visit partnershipagainstcancer.ca. The Partnership is also the driving force behind cancerview.ca, an online community linking Canadians to cancer information, services and resources. The Partnership is funded by Health Canada.

List of Figures

Figure 1. Distribution of the average annual cancer research investment by research area, 2005–2008

Figure 2. Annual investment in survivorship and palliative and end-of-life care research, 2005 to 2008

Figure 3. Average annual investment in survivorship and palliative and end-of-life care research by funding sector, 2005–2008

Figure 4. Average annual per capita investment in survivorship and palliative and end-of-life care research by province of principal investigator, 2005–2008

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

Kim Badovinac
 Manager, CCRA Canadian Cancer Research Survey
 Tel. (416) 915-9222, ext. 5739
 Email: info@ccra-acrc.ca

Lisa Marchitto
 Senior Manager, Communications
 Tel. (416) 619-5782
 Email: lisa.marchitto@partnershipagainstcancer.ca



Figure 1. Distribution of the average annual cancer research investment by research area, 2005–2008 (\$400M)

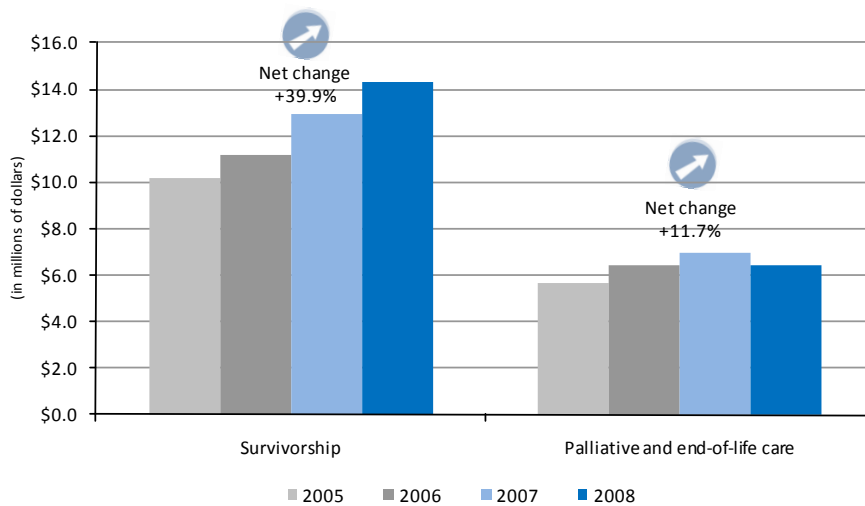


Figure 2. Annual investment in survivorship and palliative and end-of-life care research, 2005 to 2008

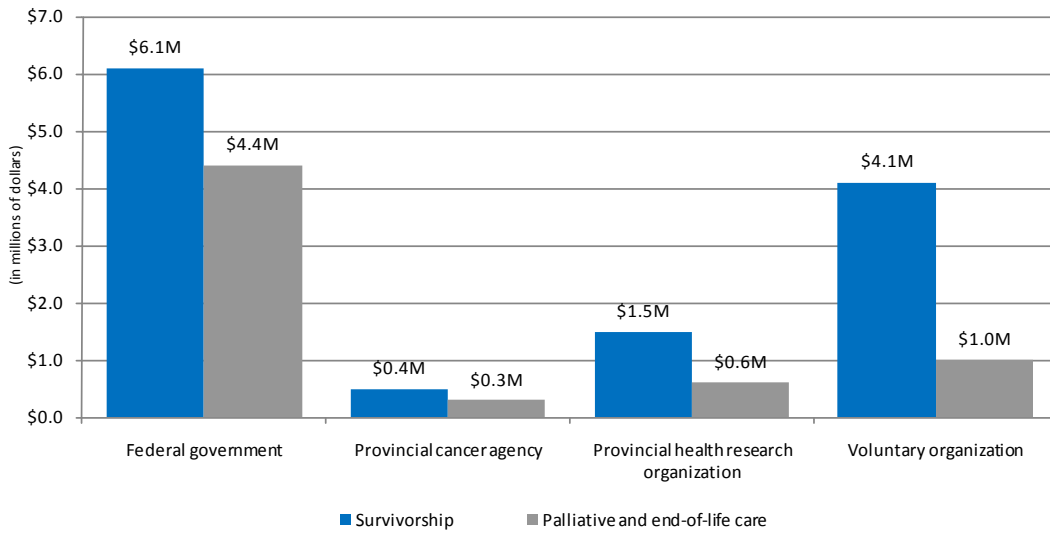


Figure 3. Average annual investment in survivorship and palliative and end-of-life care research by funding sector, 2005–2008

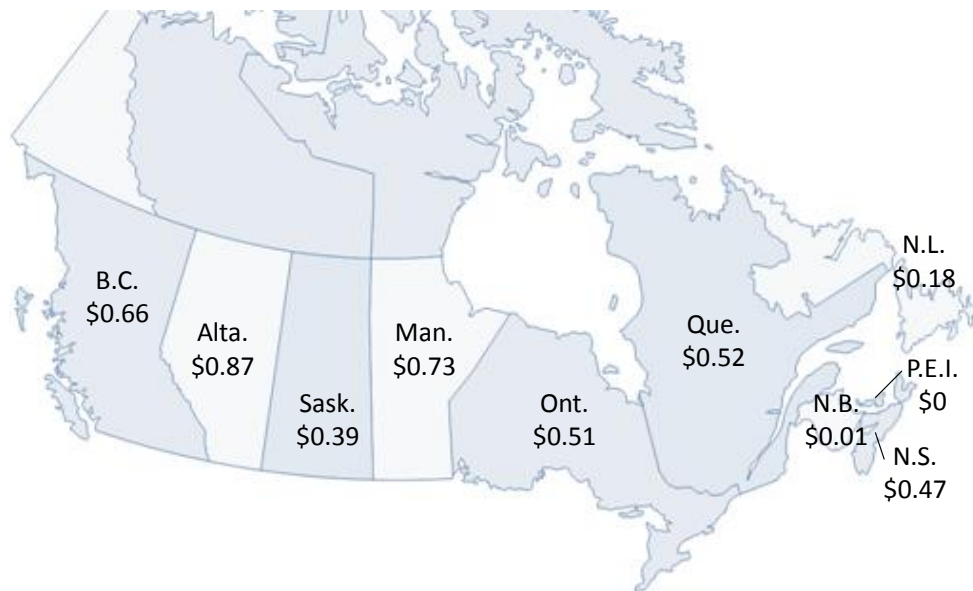


Figure 4. Average annual per capita investment in survivorship and palliative and end-of-life care research by province by principal investigator, 2005–2008