

## Cancers among people of working age in Germany

Germany has a shortage of skilled workers. The German Federal Employment Agency indicates that there are around 760-780,000 job vacancies at the beginning of 2023, a significant proportion of which cannot be filled due to a lack of suitably qualified workers (1). The driver of this development is the demographic aging of the population: the baby boomers are now at an age when the risk of developing cancer increases. This also increases the risk that these people will no longer be able to work (temporarily). For this reason, among others, it is important to support cancer survivors of working age in continuing or resuming their employment.

In Germany, more than 500,000 new cancers are currently diagnosed each year. Of these, approximately 35% were among people of working age between 20 and 64 years in 2019 (Fig. 1).

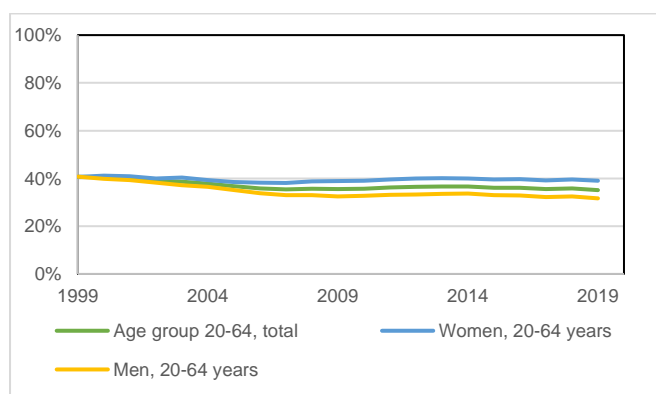


Fig. 1: Proportion of cancer diagnoses among people of working age, data source: [www.krebsdaten.de/Database](http://www.krebsdaten.de/Database)

The absolute number of people of working age affected remains fairly constant over the years. There is a slight increase due to more cancer diagnoses among women of working age from 1999 to 2019 (Fig. 2).

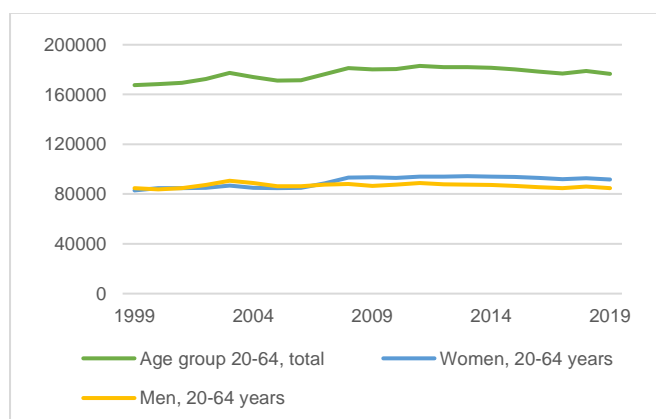


Fig. 2: Absolute numbers of cancer diagnoses among people of working age, data source: [www.krebsdaten.de/Database](http://www.krebsdaten.de/Database)

The most common cancer diagnoses in Germany are colorectal, breast, lung and prostate cancer. Proportionally, the diagnosis with the largest share of working-age patients is breast cancer (50%), followed by skin cancer (46%) and uterine cancer (42%) (Fig. 3).

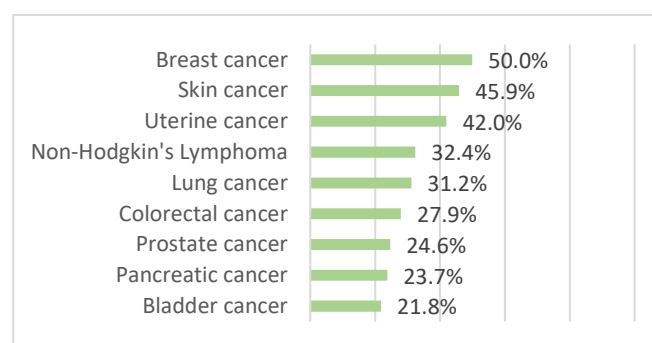


Fig. 3: Proportion of working-age cancer patients among newly diagnosed patients, by diagnosis, 2019, data source: [www.krebsdaten.de/Database](http://www.krebsdaten.de/Database)

Employment is not only of great importance due to the resulting income, but is also an important aspect of social participation. Employment can give persons with cancer structure for everyday life alongside or after the disease and can be a source of identity. The loss of work due to a cancer diagnosis thus represents a loss not only for society, but also for the quality of life of those affected themselves (2).

A recent German study shows that 63% of survivors diagnosed with breast, prostate, or colorectal cancer return to their old job, with 7% reintegrating into a new job (3). Overall, the proportion of survivors returning to work varies widely between cancer types, by job characteristics and employers, and also by personal, disease, and treatment characteristics.

We want to raise awareness of this issue on the occasion of Labor Day on May 1. There is a need for more consideration of the relevance of employment for people with cancer, but also for other serious illnesses. Knowing and addressing these needs is an important task for healthcare providers as well as for employers and politicians.

Benjamin Barnes, Enno Nowossadeck (both Robert Koch Institute), Christoph Kowalski and Sophie Schellack (both German Cancer Society) were involved in its preparation. Publisher: Deutsche Krebsgesellschaft e. V. (German Cancer Society) | Kuno-Fischer-Straße 8 | 14057 Berlin | Tel: 030 322 9329-0 | Fax: 030 322 9329-22 | [service@krebsgesellschaft.de](mailto:service@krebsgesellschaft.de) | V. i. S. d. P.: Dr. Johannes Bruns.

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