Register-based research on cancer and its determinants: opportunities and challenges

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Cancer is the second most important cause of death in the majority of developed countries and is becoming a major health threat in developing countries including India and China. However, reliable and complete data on the burden of cancer are missing for the majority of the countries of the world. Only few developed countries produce complete cancer statistics including prevalence and survival rates that cover entire population. For the majority of countries, such indicators are estimated using indirect methods or using smaller-scale (often non-representative for the whole countries) surveys. Directly estimated cancer prevalence and survival data that cover entire populations currently exist for only a few developed countries that have fully functioning cancer registries. The talk will focus on the role of cancer registries for producing reliable data for cancer monitoring and planning health services and prevention. Using cancer registry data for Lithuania, we will assess two demographic methods of evaluating population-level cancer burden depending on the availability and configurations of cancer data. Finally, outcomes of the most recent studies on social determinants of site-specific cancer based on the linkages between individual records population census and cancer registry will be discussed.