

# Strengthening the future of lung cancer research

A Global Lung Cancer Coalition position statement

January 2025

## Summary

To ensure lung cancer research delivers for patients in the decades to come, the Global Lung Cancer Coalition (GLCC) is calling on all national governments to prioritise the following key actions:

### Key actions for strengthening the future of lung cancer research:

1. Protect and invest in lung cancer research programmes
2. Publish research spend on lung cancer on an annual basis
3. Encourage greater diversity of research by ensuring research programmes account of the needs of patients across their journeys of care
4. Prioritise collaboration with global partners to conduct research and share findings to improve patient care

In [fill in name of country] this means:

#### Protect and invest in lung cancer research programmes

- Where we are now:
- What we need to do next:

#### Publish research spend on lung cancer on an annual basis

- Where we are now:
- What we need to do next:

#### Encourage greater diversity of research

- Where we are now:
- What we need to do next:

#### Prioritise collaboration with global partners

- Where we are now:
- What we need to do next:

## Background

Despite recent advances in the diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer, this disease remains the world's biggest cancer killer. In 2022, there were 2,480,675 new cases of lung cancer worldwide.<sup>1</sup>

Given the threat lung cancer presents to people and communities across the world, the importance of lung cancer research cannot be understated. It can accelerate the introduction of new and innovative treatments, lead to leaps forward in standards of care, and can significantly improve the experience of patients with lung cancer.

Given the importance of research to the future of patient care, the GLCC has been working with the Institute for Cancer Policy (ICP) since 2015 to [better understand the status of lung cancer research globally](#).

## Global trends

Trends over the last ten years have shown a welcome increase in the amount of lung cancer research, compared with breast and bowel. Specifically, there has been a notable surge in the research undertaken in immuno-oncology treatments, now the dominant area of research across lung cancer where there has been an encouraging increase in international collaboration.

However, only 24 countries have undertaken significant lung cancer research in this time.<sup>1</sup> Of these, China and the United States have produced the vast majority of papers, with the former accounting for nearly 36% of the world's total papers by 2021.

Although there are encouraging signs in the data, the ICP research findings are clear that more must be done to ensure **greater investment in**, **diversity of**, and **collaboration on lung cancer research** for the future of lung cancer care.

## Strengthening the future of lung cancer research

### Greater investment in lung cancer research

As noted above, across the globe, lung cancer is a huge public health problem. All countries need to be investing in research to ensure people affected by this disease receive the best treatment, within their individual healthcare system.

The global trend within lung cancer research has been low and slow growth, with the exception of China. While China has seen a rapid expansion, particularly from 2019 onwards, there has been a near stagnation in the two other leading lung cancer research active countries, namely the USA and Japan.

To reverse this trend GLCC is calling for all national governments to:

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<sup>1</sup> The 24 countries responsible for the majority of lung cancer research globally are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, the UK and the USA.



- 1. Protect and invest in lung cancer research programmes**
- 2. Publish research spend on lung cancer on an annual basis**

### Greater diversity of lung cancer research

The notable surge in immuno-oncology treatment research has resulted in the deprioritisation of research in other treatment areas including surgery and radiation – as well as research into other critical areas – including genetics.

Moreover, supportive and palliative care are still the least researched areas, representing just 1.5% of all lung cancer research papers (2014-2021), despite the majority of lung cancer patients requiring supportive care at various points throughout their journey.

This lack of diversity and attention on key topic areas causes concern, as it could have significant and long-term ramifications for patients, limiting the treatment, care and support that health systems can offer

As such, GLCC is calling for all national governments to:



- 3. Encourage greater diversity of research by ensuring research programmes reflect the needs of patients across their journeys of care**

### Greater collaboration on lung cancer research

There is clear evidence that international collaboration has become more prevalent. Between 2014-17 and 2018-21 the percentage of research completed with international collaboration increased in every country, with the exception of China.

This is welcome, as international collaboration is central to scientific advancement and the development of treatment, support and care that is relevant and accessible to all patients, regardless of geography or background.

As such, the GLCC is calling for all national governments, to:



- 4. Continue to prioritise collaboration with global partners to conduct research and share findings to improve patient care**

### About the Global Lung Cancer Coalition

The Global Lung Cancer Coalition is an alliance of charitable/not for profit organisations from across the world, with a key focus on improving outcomes for those affected by lung cancer. Established in 2001, the GLCC comprises 43 non-government organisations from 31 nations or territories: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, UK, and USA.

The GLCC is dedicated to improving disease outcomes for all lung cancer patients worldwide. You can read more about our work on our website: [www.lungcancercoalition.org](http://www.lungcancercoalition.org)

To contact our secretariat, please email: [glcc@roycastle.org](mailto:glcc@roycastle.org)

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<sup>i</sup> Lung cancer statistics. World Cancer Research Fund International. Accessed August 2024. Available here: <https://www.wcrf.org/cancer-trends/lung-cancer-statistics/>