

Respiratory Groups Stress Lung Cancer Risks and Importance of Early Screening and Treatment for World Lung Cancer Day

On World Lung Cancer Day, August 1, the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) and its founding member Pan African Thoracic Society, stress the importance of understanding lung cancer risk factors, as well as the importance of early detection through screening and treatment.

[According to the World Health Organization](#), lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths worldwide for both men and women. In 2020, there were 2.21 million new lung cancer cases globally and 1.80 million deaths.

While smoking is the single greatest risk factor for lung cancer, accounting for [85 percent of all cases](#), other lesser-known risk factors include environmental exposures and genetics. Environmental exposure to radon, asbestos, arsenic, beryllium, and uranium has been linked to lung cancer. The risk of lung cancer also increases with a history of cancer in another part of the body, age, family history, radiation to the chest area, and lung diseases like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

“World Lung Cancer Day offers an opportunity to raise awareness for the staggering global impact of this cancer,” says Prof Heather Zar. “With one in four cancer deaths attributed to lung cancer, it is of critical importance to promote early detection through symptom awareness and lung cancer screening. Through early detection, treatment can begin, the cancer is less likely to spread, and we can begin to reduce the number of lung cancer deaths worldwide.”

If you currently smoke or have a history of smoking and are 50 years or older, you may be a candidate for a screening low-dose CT scan that can potentially detect lung cancer in its earliest stages.

Lung cancer symptoms include a persistent and worsening cough, coughing up blood, chest or back pain, and difficulty swallowing. Tests that may be used to diagnose lung cancer include chest X-rays, Chest CT and PET scans, bronchoscopy, and needle biopsies.

To learn more about lung cancer screening, visit <https://www.iarc.who.int/infographics/benefits-and-harms-of-lung-cancer-screening/>
For tobacco cessation resources, visit <https://www.who.int/teams/health-promotion/tobacco-control>.

For more Pan African Thoracic Society resources, please visit <https://panafricanthoracic.org/>

About the Forum of International Respiratory Societies
[The Forum of International Respiratory Societies](#) (FIRS) is an organisation comprised of the world's leading international respiratory societies working together to improve lung health

globally. The goal of FIRS is to unify and enhance efforts to improve lung health through the combined work of its more than 70,000 members globally.

FIRS comprises the American College of Chest Physicians (CHEST), American Thoracic Society (ATS), the Asian Pacific Society of Respiriology (APSR), Asociación Latinoamericana de Tórax (ALAT), European Respiratory Society (ERS), International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union), Pan African Thoracic Society (PATS), the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) and the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD).

About Pan African Thoracic Society

[Pan African Thoracic Society](#) (PATS) is a society comprising healthcare professionals from across the continent and beyond. Since its establishment in 2003, we have grown to include over 1,000 members from 65 countries. Our primary mission is to promote lung health in Africa, a continent deeply affected by respiratory diseases. Through education, research, advocacy, optimal care, and capacity development, we strive to effectively address respiratory challenges in Africa. We actively collaborate with regional and international respiratory organizations to improve lung health globally. Guided by FIRS and an influential Executive Committee we are committed to reducing morbidity and mortality associated with respiratory diseases in Africa