

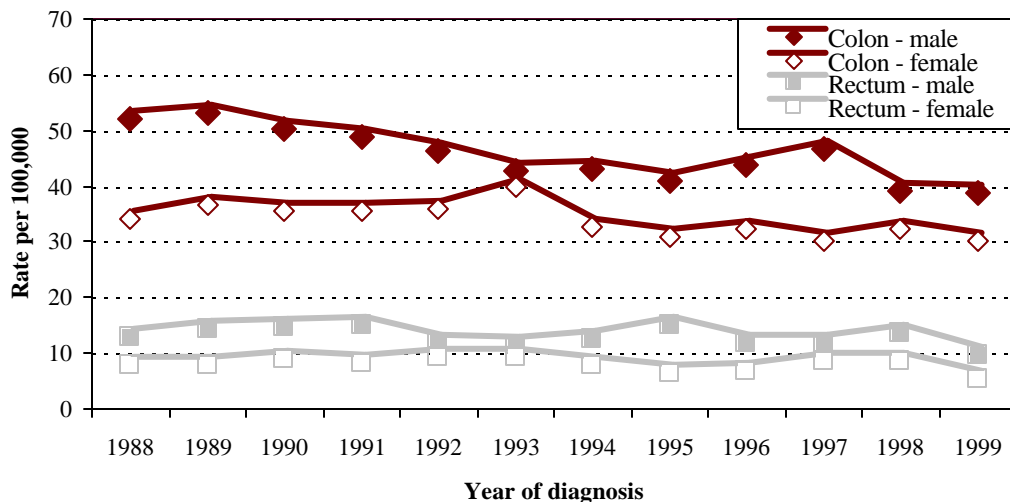


Colorectal Cancer in the Santa Clara Region 1988-1999

March 2002

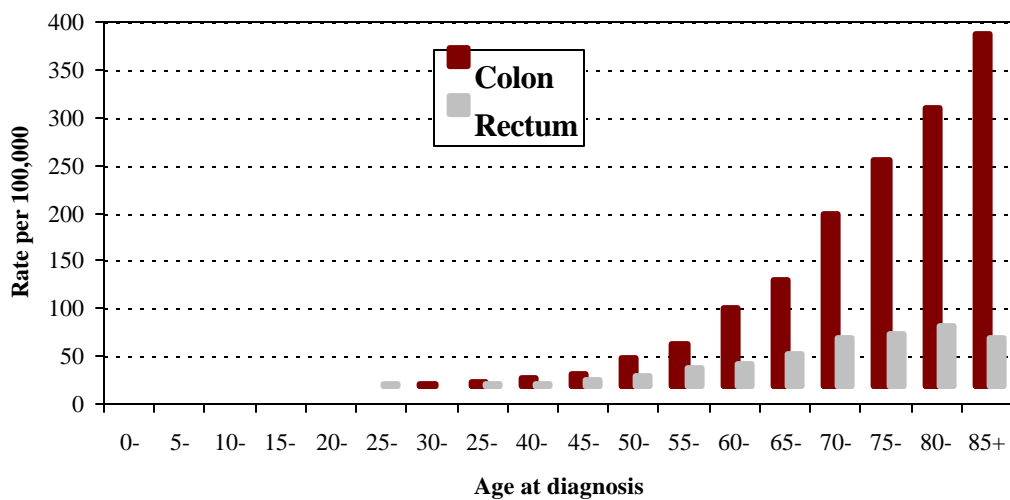
Colorectal cancer is third most common cancer in the Santa Clara Region, comprising nearly 11% of all newly diagnosed cancers between 1995 and 1999. Of colorectal cancer cases, the majority (70%) are colon cancers, while 30% are rectal cancers.

Figure 1. Age-adjusted incidence rates of invasive colon and rectal cancer, by sex and year of diagnosis, 1988-1999.



Between 1988 and 1999, colon cancer incidence rates fell slightly, but incidence of rectal cancer did not change substantially. Rates for both colon and rectal cancers were consistently higher in males than in females (Figure 1, above).

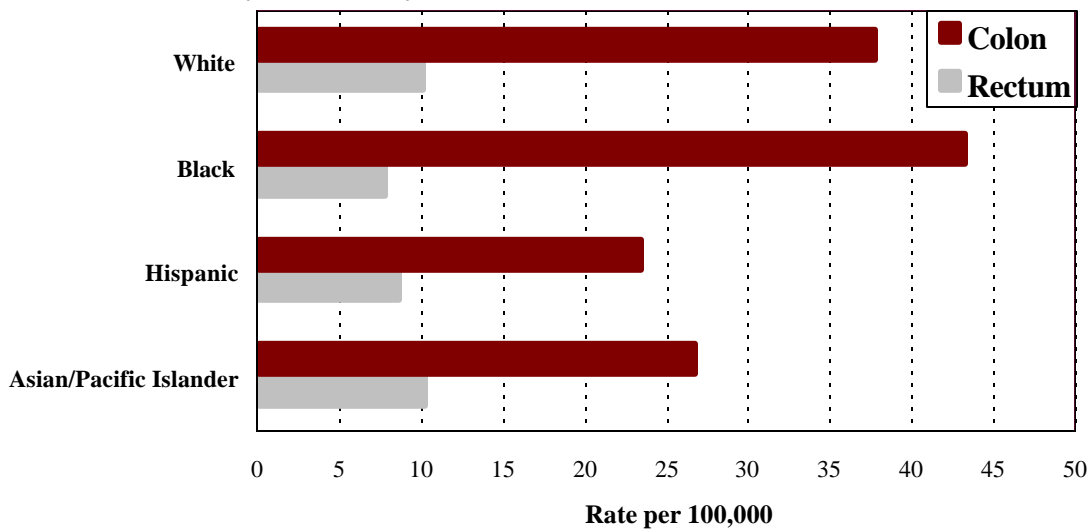
Figure 2. Average annual age-specific incidence rates of invasive colon and rectal cancer, by age at diagnosis, 1995-1999.



Incidence of colon cancer increased more sharply with age than rectal cancer, peaking in the oldest age groups (Figure 2, above).

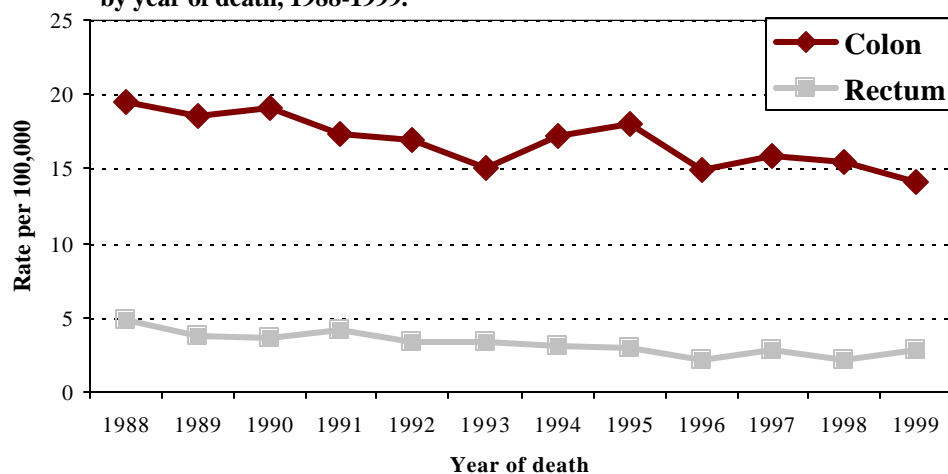


Figure 3. Average annual age-adjusted incidence rates of invasive colon and rectal cancer, by race/ethnicity, 1995-1999.



Colon cancer showed more variation by racial/ethnic group than rectal cancer. Blacks and whites had substantially higher rates of colon cancer than Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders. (Figure 3, above).

Figure 4. Age-adjusted mortality rates for invasive colon and rectal cancer, by year of death, 1988-1999.



Since 1988, mortality rates of colon cancer have declined slightly, while mortality rates for rectal cancer have remained relatively stable (Figure 4, above).

Technical Notes: Because age distributions vary by population, a standard statistical procedure called “age-adjustment” was used so that we can examine differences in cancer incidence and mortality rates due to factors other than age. Rates are age-adjusted (using the Year 2000 population standard) unless noted to be age-specific. Race/ethnicity was categorized as four mutually-exclusive racial/ethnic groups: non-Hispanic whites (whites), non-Hispanic blacks (blacks), Hispanics, and non-Hispanic Asians/Pacific Islanders (Asians/Pacific Islanders).

About the data: Cancer data have been collected in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties since 1973, and in Monterey, San Benito, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties since 1988, forming two parts (Regions 1 and 8) of the California Cancer Registry. These counties, referred to as the Greater Bay Area are also part of the National Cancer Institute’s Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) registry program.

Founded in 1974, the mission of the **Northern California Cancer Center** is to reduce the burden of cancer through surveillance, epidemiology, prevention research and education. Essential to this mission is collaboration with partners in cancer research, education and the community.