

## **Lifestyle cause of 40% of cancers in the UK**

**The latest Cancer Research UK report on the cancerous state of the nation claims that 40% of cancers diagnosed – some 130,000 cases - are related to lifestyle and could be avoided.**

No surprise, the major culprits are smoking, drinking and eating the wrong foods. In fact, tobacco tops the poll causing 23% of cases in men and 15.6% in women. Next is a lack of fresh fruit and vegetables in men's diets but for women, being overweight is the problem.

Leading the research was Professor Max Parkin who commented: "Many people believe cancer is down to fate or 'in the genes' and that it is the luck of the draw whether they get it. Looking at all the evidence, it's clear that around 40% of all cancers are caused by things we mostly have the power to change."

Prof Parkin went on to say: "We didn't expect to find that eating fruit and vegetables would prove to be so important in protecting men against cancer. And among women we didn't expect being overweight to be more of a risk factor than alcohol."

So for men the advice is stop smoking, cut down on the alcohol intake and eat more fresh fruit and vegetables. For women... also quit smoking but watch your weight.

In total, 14 lifestyle and environmental factors, such as where people live and the job they do, combine to cause 134,000 cancers in the UK each year.

As might seem obvious, one in 25 of cancers is linked to a person's job, such as being exposed to chemicals or asbestos.

The link between smoking and lung cancer has been well established but others were less recognized as the Cancer Research UK report found. For breast cancer, nearly a 10th of the risk comes from being overweight or obese, far outweighing the impact of whether or not the woman breastfeeds or drinks alcohol.

For oesophageal or gullet cancer, half of the risk comes from eating too little fruit and vegetables, while only a fifth of the risk is from alcohol.

For stomach cancer, the data indicated that a fifth of the risk comes from having too much salt in the diet. Some cancers, like mouth and throat cancer, are caused almost entirely by lifestyle choices.

### **Xynergy comment**

The big question is, do people have the motivation or will power to change, what for many, are the habits of a lifetime? We can preach about diet and lifestyle and nauseam but the change has to come through social pressure. So many of these

lifestyle factors are connected with enjoying the company of friends and family, having a meal, a drink and a smoke and so on. And, this has probably been so since the dawn of civilization. We don't have to replace being sociable, we simply have to find better 'content' and ways to enjoy ourselves without too many sensory stimulants or relaxants. A good meal doesn't have to be a toxic meal. But, it will take a seismic shift.