Abstract

Prof. Dr. Heiko Becher
Universitätsklinikum Hamburg-Eppendorf

Methods to estimate the number of lung cancer cases caused by passive smoking in Germany

We investigated whether changes in the prevalence of passive smoking, e.g. by the non-smoking legislation in Germany, has led to a reduction of the number of lung cancer deaths attributable to this exposure. In the estimation process, a number of methodological problems arise. First, we estimate the proportion of smokers, ex-smokers and never-smokers among all lung cancer deaths in Germany. Since this information is not directly available from cancer registries or mortality data, we developed two indirect estimation methods. The resulting figures are combined with estimates of the relative risk and the prevalence of passive smoking. Compared to an estimate from 1994, the reduction is over 50%. The statistical methods used are presented and discussed.