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Canadians Greatly Over-Estimate Five-Year Survival Rate**
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Funding in Effort to Double Survivor Rate*

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Toronto, ON - November is Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, and awareness of pancreatic cancer - the most deadly form of cancer which afflicts approximately 4,000 Canadians each year - is low, according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted in support of Ipsos and Ipsos Charity Trust's pancreatic-cancer initiative. Just four in ten (37%) say they're 'knowledgeable' (6% very/31% somewhat) about pancreatic cancer, while most (63%) admit they're 'not knowledgeable' (16% not at all/46% not very).

In comparison, significantly more Canadians say they're knowledgeable about breast cancer (75%), lung cancer (69%), prostate cancer (58%) and colorectal cancer (46%), while knowledge of pancreatic cancer (37%) lags behind.

The lack of general awareness about pancreatic cancer is likely a function of the relatively low proportion of Canadians (6%) who say they personally know someone (a family member, neighbour, co-worker or friend) who has survived pancreatic cancer. This compares to six in ten (61%) who know someone who has survived breast cancer, or other forms of cancer such as prostate cancer (42%), lung cancer (22%), or colorectal cancer (19%).

Combined, these five types of cancers are responsible for approximately 60% of all cancer-related deaths. When asked to estimate what proportion of cancer-related deaths are attributed to each of these cancers:

- Canadians on average believe that 16% of cancer-related deaths are attributed to lung cancer, when in fact it is 27%.
- On average, Canadians believe that 16% of cancer-related deaths are caused by breast cancer, when in fact it is only 7%.
- On average, Canadians believe that 11% of cancer-related deaths are attributed to prostate cancer, well above the 5% that actually are.
- Canadians think that 10% of cancer-related deaths are due to colorectal cancer, slightly below the 12% that are in actuality.
- Canadians believe that 8% of cancer-related deaths are due to pancreatic cancer, when in fact in 2010 it was 5%.

While the overall number of deaths due to pancreatic cancer might be relatively low compared to these other forms of cancer, the survival rate for individual sufferers is much lower – and is greatly underestimated by Canadians. As an example, prostate cancer has the highest five-year survival rate with 96% of those diagnosed with prostate cancer surviving for at least five years. Canadians were asked to estimate what the survival rate is for the other four types of cancer studied, and they under-estimate the survival rate on two, and over-estimate it on two – in particular for pancreatic cancer:

- Canadians believe that the five-year survival rate for pancreatic cancer is 27%, when in fact it is just 6%, making it the most deadly form of cancer.

- Canadians believe, on average, that the lung cancer five-year survival rate is 29%, when in reality it is only 16%
- On average, Canadians believe that the five-year survival rate for breast cancer is only 52%, when in fact it is 89%.
- Canadians think the five-year survival rate for colorectal cancer is 39%, when it is actually 63%.

When it comes to how donations towards cancer research should be handled, most Canadians would support a change to the current system of how cancer-research donations are collected and distributed. A majority (56%) are closer to the opinion that ‘all donations toward cancer and cancer research should be made centrally so that a team of knowledgeable health professionals and scientists can direct these funds towards the cancers and treatments most in need’. Adopting the opposite stance, a minority (44%) more closely believe that ‘people should continue to donate to the type of cancer of their choice even if that leaves treatment and research into lesser-known cancers underfunded’.

Approximately 4,000 Canadians will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer each year. Pancreatic cancer has the highest mortality rate of all the major cancer types. 94% of patients die within five years of their diagnosis and 75% die within the first year of diagnosis. It’s the only major cancer with five-year survival rates in the single digits (6%), and the survival rate has not improved in the past forty years. Currently pancreatic cancer receives less than 1% of all research-based funding and less than one-tenth of a percent of all public donations.

Reflecting on these statistics, almost all Canadians ‘agree’ (54% strongly/39% somewhat) that ‘governments in Canada should cooperate to create a pancreatic cancer strategy with a goal of increasing research funding and doubling the survival rate of patients who are diagnosed



with pancreatic cancer over the next five years'. Just 7% 'disagree' (2% strongly/5% somewhat) with this course of action.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between October 17 to 25, 2011, in support of Ipsos and Ipsos Charity Trust's Pancreatic Cancer Initiative. For this survey, a sample of 1,012 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and political composition to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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