Abstract

Gastric Cancer or stomach cancer represents a major public health problem in the contiguous United States and in Alaska. Stomach cancer is the fourth most common malignancy and the second most common cause of cancer-related deaths throughout the world. A retrospective study of gastric cancer cases from 1996 to 2011 was undertaken and data were extracted from the Alaska Cancer Registry where cases are consistently recorded and centralized. Data were analyzed using the National Cancer Institute’s SEER* Stat statistical software (version 8.1.5). The goal of the project was to provide a detailed epidemiologic descriptive analysis of gastric cancer to better inform health professionals, the public and to provide additional resources for future research. Results showed that gastric cancer incidence rates in Alaska are significantly higher than the rest of the nation. Alaska Natives and American Indians in Alaska have the highest rate of gastric cancer than all races/ethnicities combined. Males have a risk prevalence of gastric cancer that is twice than females. The Alaska Native male and Asian/Pacific Islander male gastric cancer incidence rates are much higher than males from other races. In addition, Southeast Alaska Natives’ incidence rates are lower than rates for non-Southeast Alaska Natives. Based on the findings, study recommendations include the following: 1) Health education campaigns for at risk-groups; 2) Making health care services available; 3) Education of local health community workers and health care professionals; 4) Promoting new ways of preserving food in rural communities and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables; 5) Encouraging patients to discuss their family history with healthcare providers determine potential risks for inherited cancer syndromes.