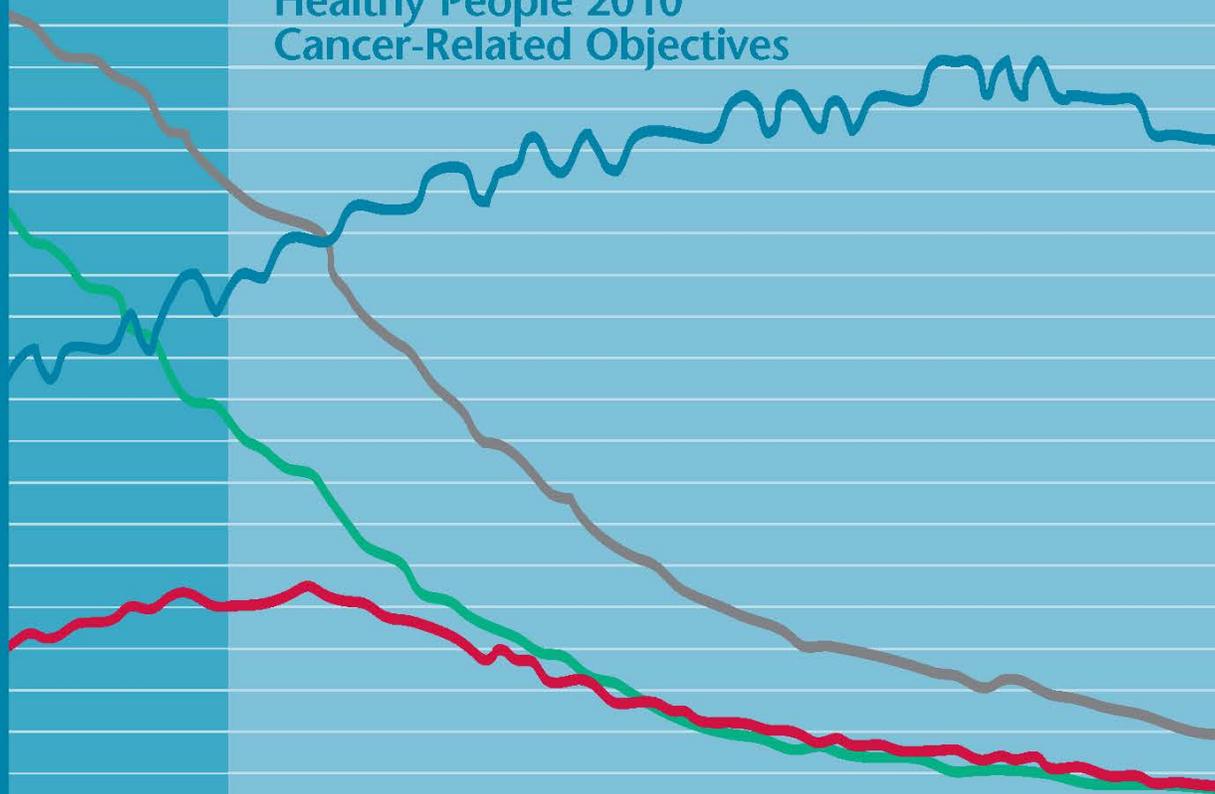


Methods for Measuring Cancer Disparities

A Review Using Data Relevant to
Healthy People 2010
Cancer-Related Objectives



Methods for Measuring Cancer Disparities: Using Data Relevant to Healthy People 2010 Cancer-Related Objectives

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Healthy People 2010 has two overarching goals: to increase the span of healthy life and to eliminate health disparities across the categories of gender, race or ethnicity, education or income, disability, geographic location, and sexual orientation. This report raises some conceptual issues and provides an innovative methodological approach germane to measuring progress toward the goal of eliminating health disparities. It highlights major issues that may affect the choice of measurement techniques and systematically reviews methods used in health disparities research. The authors recommend a sequence of steps to measure and monitor cancer-related disparity trends using a suite of indicators and measurement strategies explaining in detail the strengths and weaknesses of each.

- In most situations a single measure will not provide adequate and appropriate information for policy decisions relating to disparities in health.
- Absolute and relative measures, e.g. changes in the absolute frequency of cancer of two groups vs. the changes in the relative frequency, can often lead to different conclusions about whether health disparities between these groups are increasing or decreasing.
- It is important to take into account the size of population groups or segments and their share of the total population along with the magnitude of their disparities to determine the impact of these disparities on the public health system.

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