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Cancer Deaths Up 679% Among St. Petersburg Teens – Official Report

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Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

Children and teenagers in St. Petersburg are dying from cancer almost 680% more than they were 10 years ago, according to a new report by the region's anti-cancer program.

Dozens of Russian regions have cut spending on cancer treatments in recent years amid rising costs. Advocacy groups have long campaigned for easier access to cancer drugs for patients across Russia, with many claiming that current rules have led to a number of suicides among terminally ill people.

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The mortality rate from cancer among children aged 10-14 years rose by 679% between 2008 and 2017, the report cited by media Saturday said. In 2017, 4.5 people per 100,000 died of cancer compared to 0.6 deaths per 100,000 people in 2008.

Cancer-related deaths among teenagers aged 15-19 years increased by 200%, from 1.3 deaths per 100,000 people in 2008 to 3.9 in 2017. The number of deaths of children aged 5-9 years increased by 15.8%.

The overall increase in mortality of St. Petersburg residents aged 5-19 years rose due to an increase in oncological diseases of the brain, soft tissues and lymphoid leukemia, the program said.

Meanwhile, mortality rates among adult cancer patients decreased over the same time period.

According to the report, city authorities plan to take a number of actions to combat the increase in mortality rates including developing an outpatient cancer treatment program, improving diagnostic methods, purchasing new equipment for cancer treatment facilities and improving drug therapy.

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