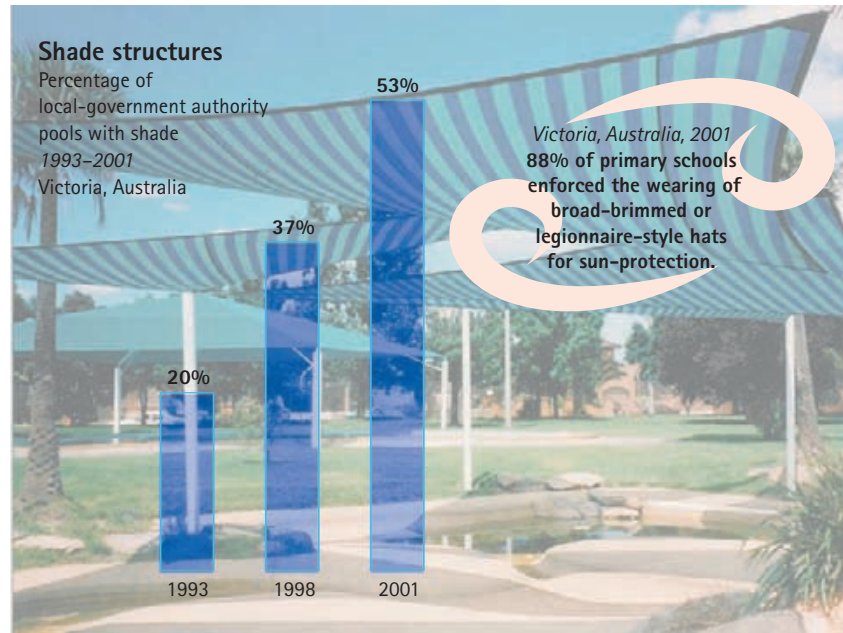


Prevention: population and systems approaches

"The health of the people is really the foundation upon which all their happiness and all their powers as a state depend."
Benjamin Disraeli, Prime Minister (1804-81)

Cancer prevention programmes are being increasingly linked to reductions in incidence and/or mortality. These programmes either simply encourage healthy behaviour changes, or focus on policies that support such changes (for example tobacco taxes, nutritional advice, shade structures, immunization). Childhood hepatocellular carcinoma incidence in Taiwan has substantially decreased since the introduction of a national policy for universal infant hepatitis B vaccination. Anti-smoking campaigns in many industrialized nations have resulted in considerable decreases in smoking-related cancer mortality. Nationwide skin-cancer programmes in Australia (which began in the 1980s and are now recognized as the most comprehensive, well funded, and longest lasting of any others worldwide) have successfully produced changes in sun protection attitudes and behaviours.

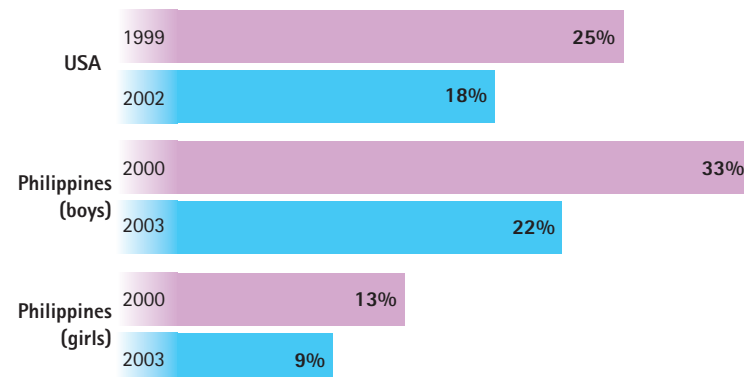
The success of national cancer prevention initiatives depends on compliance amongst the target population, but to an even greater extent on a country's health services infrastructure. There is much global variation in the resources necessary for cancer control, including equipment, facilities, funding, and trained medical professionals. To achieve the most impact, national authorities must select activities that make the most efficient use of resources and are acceptable and relevant to society.



Effectiveness of measures to prevent smoking in young people

Decreases in prevalence of youth smoking after anti-tobacco campaigns 1999-2002, 2000-03

■ prevalence before campaign
■ prevalence after campaign



There are cost-effective measures to reduce cancer that every government can take.

Cervical cancer prevention

Annual percentage change in incidence of invasive cervical cancers 1950s-2000 selected Western European countries

■ organized screening programme initiated at some point during period
■ no organized screening programme during the period

