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Background: Clinical trials are essential for advancing cancer treatment. Yet, there is limited access to them in Europe. To ascertain the extent of potential inequalities in access to clinical trials in Europe, we compared their distribution among European countries.

Methods: The ClinicalTrials.gov database was searched for interventional clinical trials in adults with neoplasms. Available data from phase I-III trials between 06/09 to 06/19 in Europe were retrieved. We considered the number of clinical trials registered in each country and one “trial-entry” was defined as one trial/country.

Results: In total, 18454 trial-entries were identified, of which 12% were phase I, 10% phase II, 32% phase II, 2% phase II/III and 44% phase III; 74% were industry-sponsored, 15% were academic and 11% were an academic/industry partnership. The number of trials per country varied from 2.48 in Central/Eastern Europe to 5.33/100,000 inhabitants in Northern Europe. The proportion of phase I-II trials was larger (phase I-II, 61%) than in late-phase trials (phase II-III, 7%). Portugal, Spain, France (45/16), UK (45/13), Italy (38/19) and Belgium (35/12).

Conclusions: The number of new cancer cases and deaths in 2020 has been estimated per country by sex and age group, for 25 major cancer sites. The results are included and disseminated through the European Cancer Information System (ECIS) web application.

Legal entity responsible for the study: The authors.

Funding: European Commission.

Disclosure: All authors have declared no conflicts of interest.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anonc.2020.08.2306