GLOBAL LUNG CANCER COALITION

Israel briefing:
Symptom awareness, attitudes to lung cancer and views on screening
Findings from a global survey

Overview

The Global Lung Cancer Coalition (GLCC) is a partnership of 44 patient organisations across 32 nations / territories, working to improve lung cancer awareness, reduce stigma and improve outcomes.

The GLCC Patient Charter asserts that all people with lung cancer have the right to dignity, respect, quality care, informed decision making, privacy and freedom from blame and stigma.

Public perceptions can significantly affect these rights. Stigma and low symptom awareness may delay help-seeking and diagnosis, making it important to understand attitudes towards lung cancer.

In 2026, the GLCC conducted a global study to explore public attitudes to lung cancer, awareness of symptoms and views on screening. The research builds on studies undertaken in 2010, 2013, 2017 and 2023.

The GLCC is calling on governments and health systems across the world to:

- Increase recognition of lung cancer symptoms through targeted public awareness campaigns
- Challenge stigma and misconceptions through evidence-based awareness initiatives
- Implement national lung cancer screening programmes to support earlier detection and treatment
- Ensure equitable access to screening, diagnosis and care for all people affected by lung cancer

This briefing sets out the key findings from Israel in 2026 and how they compare with other countries included in the survey. The results highlight three key themes:

- **Awareness of lung cancer symptoms remains mixed**, with around a third of respondents unable to identify a single symptom of lung cancer, although Israel performs better than a number of other countries included in the survey.
- **Levels of stigma towards people with lung cancer are relatively high**, with almost half of respondents reporting less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for those with other types of cancer, placing Israel above the global average.
- **Public support for lung cancer screening is strong,** with more than eight in ten respondents supporting a national screening programme, reflecting broad backing for efforts to improve earlier diagnosis and build on Israel's experience of piloting lung cancer screening among high-risk populations.

Key findings: Israel

Symptom recognition

- A **third** of people responding to the survey (**33.9%**) said they did not know any symptoms of lung cancer, down substantially from **50.3%** in **2023.**
- Younger people were less likely to recognise symptoms, with **43.1%** of **18-24 year olds** unable to identify any symptoms, compared with **24.7%** of those **aged 45-54**.
- People who had never smoked were more likely than those who currently smoke or had smoked previously to report not knowing any symptoms (**39.9% vs. 29.3%**).

Attitudes towards lung cancer

- Almost **half** of respondents (**45.9%**) reported having less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for people with other types of cancer, down from **50.8%** in **2023**, but still above the **global average** of **39.2%**.

- Men were more likely than women to report having less sympathy (**49.2% vs. 38.6%**).
- People **aged 25-34** were the most likely to report having less sympathy (**50.9%**).
- People who currently smoke or had smoked previously were slightly more likely than those who had never smoked to express less sympathy (**47.3% vs. 43.2%**).

Views on lung cancer screening

- More than **eight in ten** of respondents (**85%**) agreed there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early, up from **82.1%** in **2023.**
- Women were slightly more likely to support lung cancer screening programmes than men (**85.6% vs. 84.7%**).
- Support was highest among people **aged 55 and over** (**89.5%**).
- People who currently smoke or had smoked previously were slightly more supportive than people who had never smoked (**87.1% vs. 83.4%**).

Methodology

The GLCC commissioned the market research agency Censuswide to undertake an online survey of adults across 32 countries between 17 March 2026 – 24 March 2026. The survey samples included 1,000 adults from Israel and data was weighted using age, gender and region to produce a representative sample in each country. Respondents were asked the following questions:

- Q1. There are many warning signs and symptoms of lung cancer. Please list as many symptoms of lung cancer as you can think of [a tick box was provided for 'Don't know'].
- Q2. Lung cancer is mainly caused by smoking cigarettes and other tobacco products. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for other types of cancer.
- Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: There should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early.

Further analysis

Symptom recognition

Raising awareness of lung cancer symptoms is important, as recognising potential symptoms and seeking medical advice can support earlier diagnosis and better outcomes.

In 2026, 33.9% of people in Israel said they did not know any symptoms of lung cancer, down substantially from 50.3% in 2023. This is slightly above the 2026 global average of 32.7% and places Israel around the middle of the countries included in the survey. However, around one in three people were still unable to identify any symptoms, highlighting the importance of continued awareness efforts.

Among respondents who could identify symptoms, the most commonly recognised were persistent cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chest pain, and coughing up blood. Respondents also identified fatigue, unexplained weight loss, hoarseness or changes to the voice, and recurrent respiratory infections such as pneumonia, although these were less commonly recognised.

The findings suggest that awareness in Israel is concentrated around a number of commonly recognised symptoms, while awareness of the broader range of potential lung cancer symptoms

remains more limited.

Chart 1. Percentage of respondents who indicated they did not know any symptoms, by country

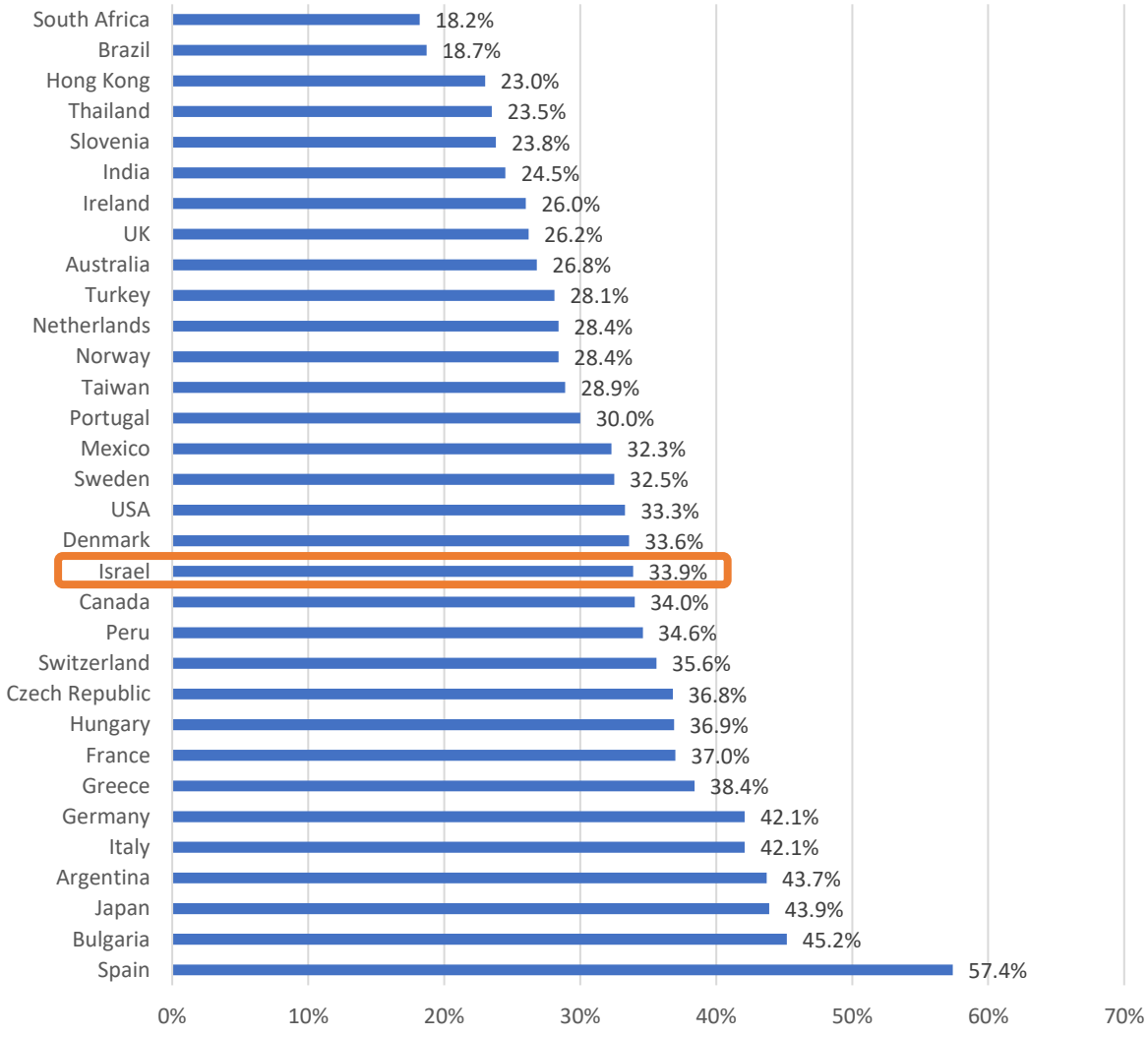


Chart 2. Percentage of respondents in Israel who indicated they did not know any symptoms, by age

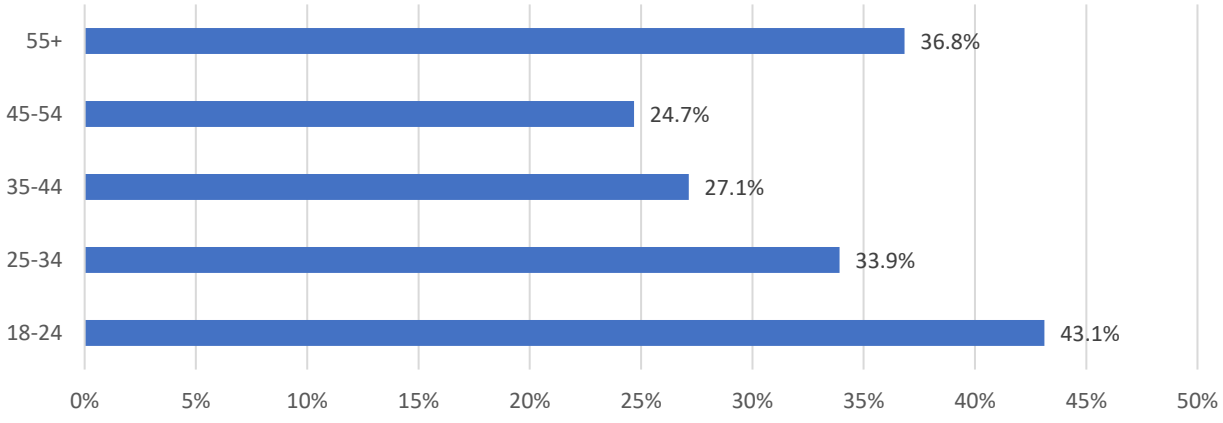
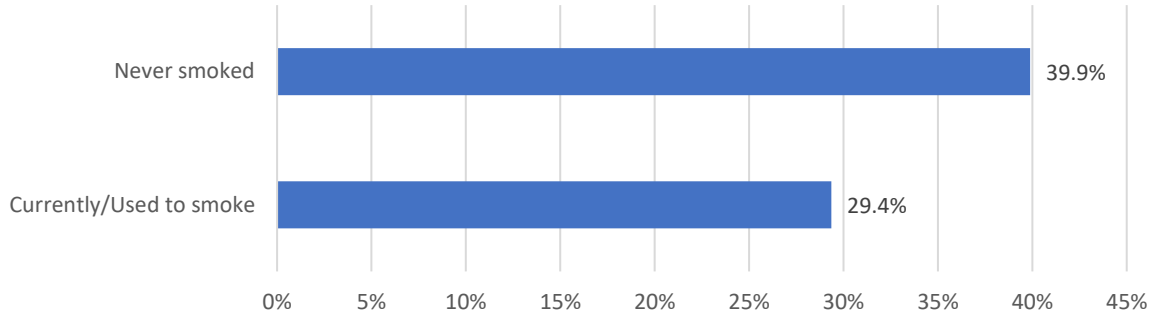


Chart 3. Percentage of respondents in Israel who indicated they did not know any symptoms of smoking, by status



Attitudes towards lung cancer

Around 60-70% of lung cancer cases are linked to smoking, which can contribute to stigma and blame associated with the disease.[1] This is concerning because lung cancer can affect people regardless of smoking history, while stigma and misconceptions may discourage some individuals from seeking medical advice when symptoms first appear. The GLCC believes that everyone living with lung cancer deserves access to high-quality treatment and care, regardless of the cause of their cancer.

In Israel, 45.9% of respondents reported having less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for people with other types of cancer, down from 50.8% in 2023. This remains above the 2026 global average of 39.2%, placing Israel among the countries with higher levels of reported stigma in the survey. These findings highlight the importance of continued efforts to improve understanding of lung cancer and challenge blame and stigma associated with the disease.

[1] World Health Organization (2026) *Lung cancer*. Available at: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/lung-cancer (Accessed: 11 August 2026)

Chart 4. Percentage of respondents who agree with the statement they have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for other types of cancer, by country

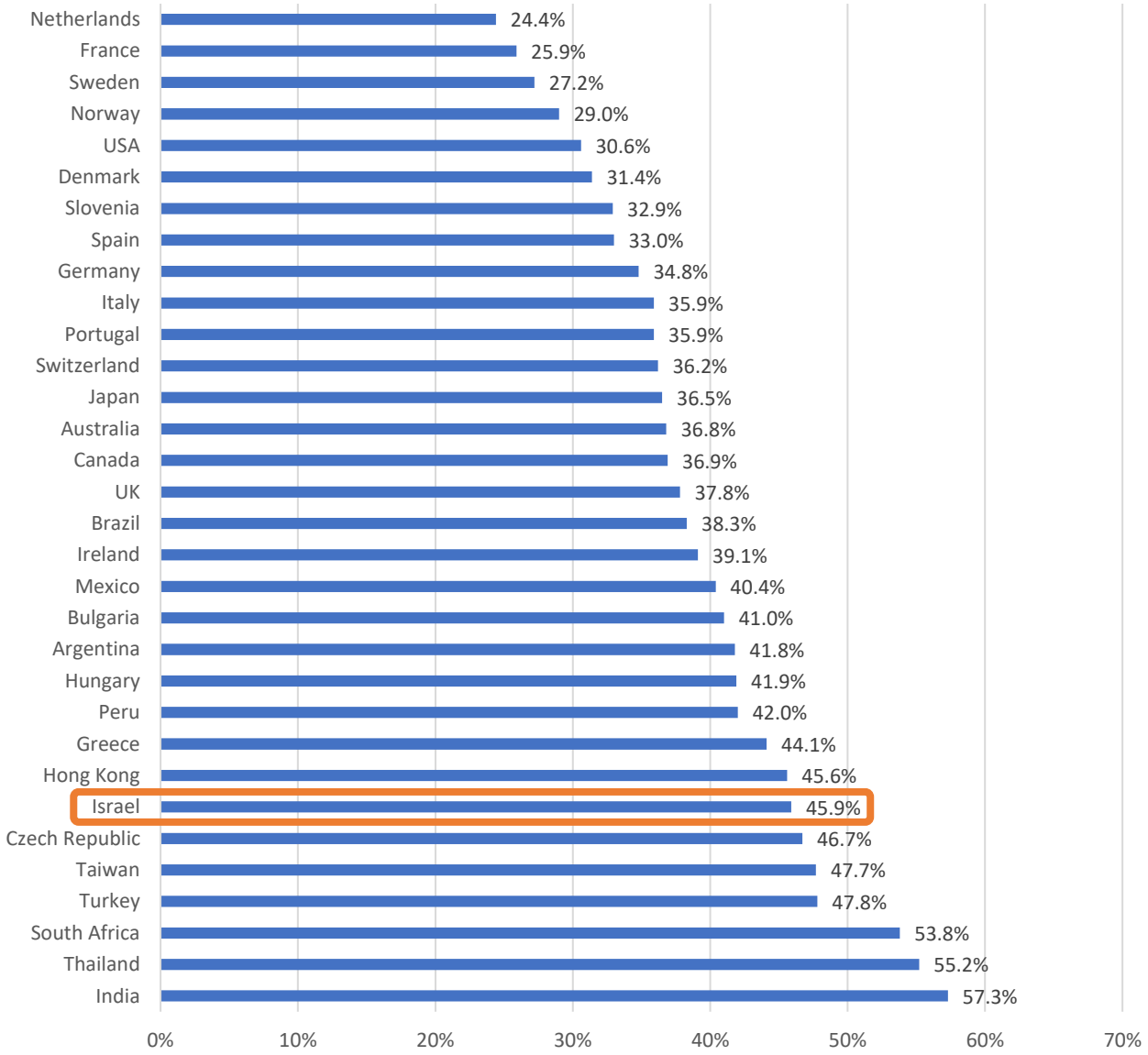


Chart 5. Percentage of respondents in Israel who agree with the statement they have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for other types of cancer, by age

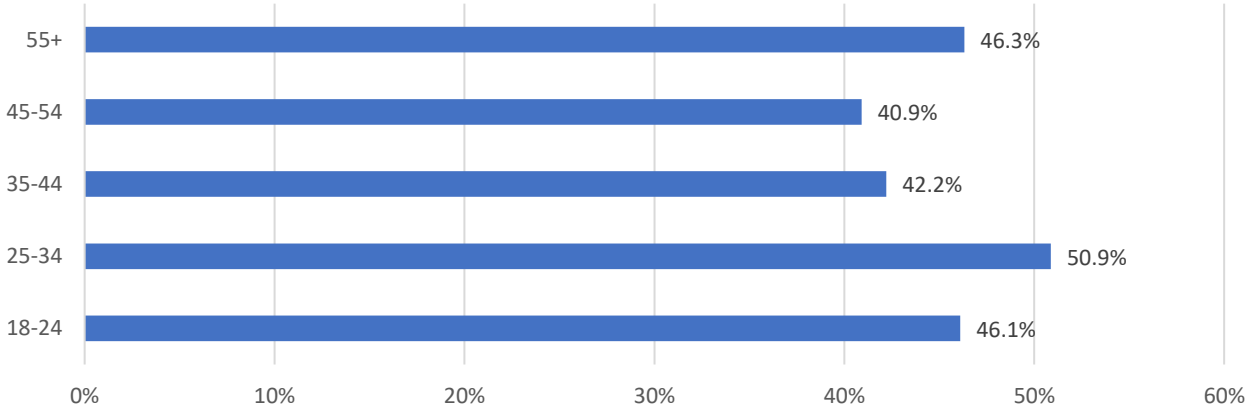
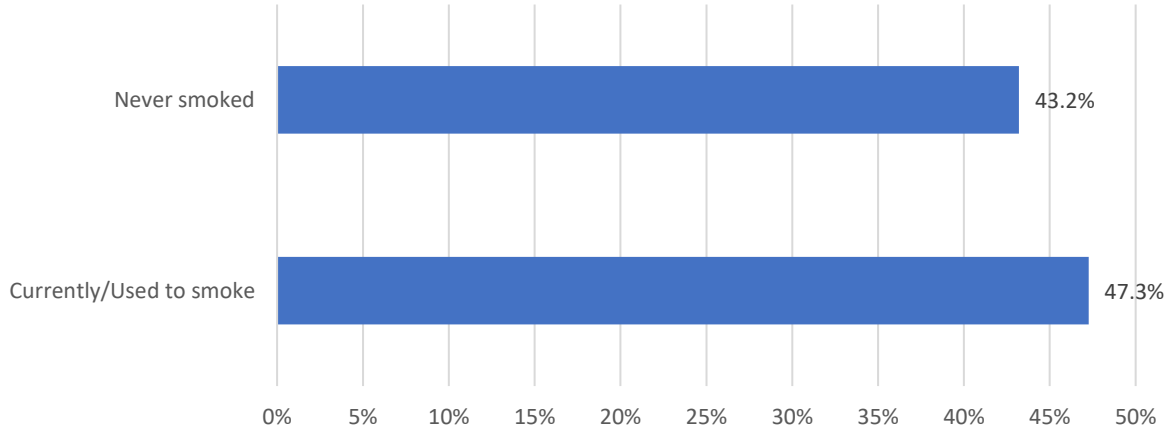


Chart 6. Percentage of respondents in Israel who agree with the statement they have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for other types of cancer, by smoking status



Views on lung cancer screening

A national lung cancer screening programme is a key measure to reduce the substantial burden that lung cancer places on individuals, families and healthcare systems. Lung cancer screening using low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) can save lives by detecting the disease at an earlier, more treatable stage. A large clinical trial found that LDCT screening reduced lung cancer mortality by 24% in men and 33% in women after 10 years of follow-up compared with no screening.[2]

Support for lung cancer screening was strong in Israel, with 85% of respondents agreeing that there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early. These findings demonstrate strong public backing for measures to improve earlier diagnosis of lung cancer.

Israel has undertaken a national pilot programme to assess the feasibility of implementing lung cancer screening among people at high risk of the disease.[3] Building on the experience of the pilot programme, there is an opportunity to consider how access to lung cancer screening could be

[2] de Koning, H.J., van der Aalst, C.M., de Jong, P.A. *et al.* (2020) 'Reduced Lung-Cancer Mortality with Volume CT Screening in a Randomized Trial', *New England Journal of Medicine*, 382(6), pp. 503-513. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa1911793

[3] **Vinker S, Berdnikov M, Mutter D, et al.** (2026) *Feasibility assessment of implementing lung cancer screening among current and former heavy smokers: a national pilot program in Israel (2021-2024).* **Lung Cancer**, Volume 219, Article 109536.

expanded to support earlier detection and improve outcomes for people at high risk of the disease.

Chart 7. Percentage of respondents who agree there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early, by country

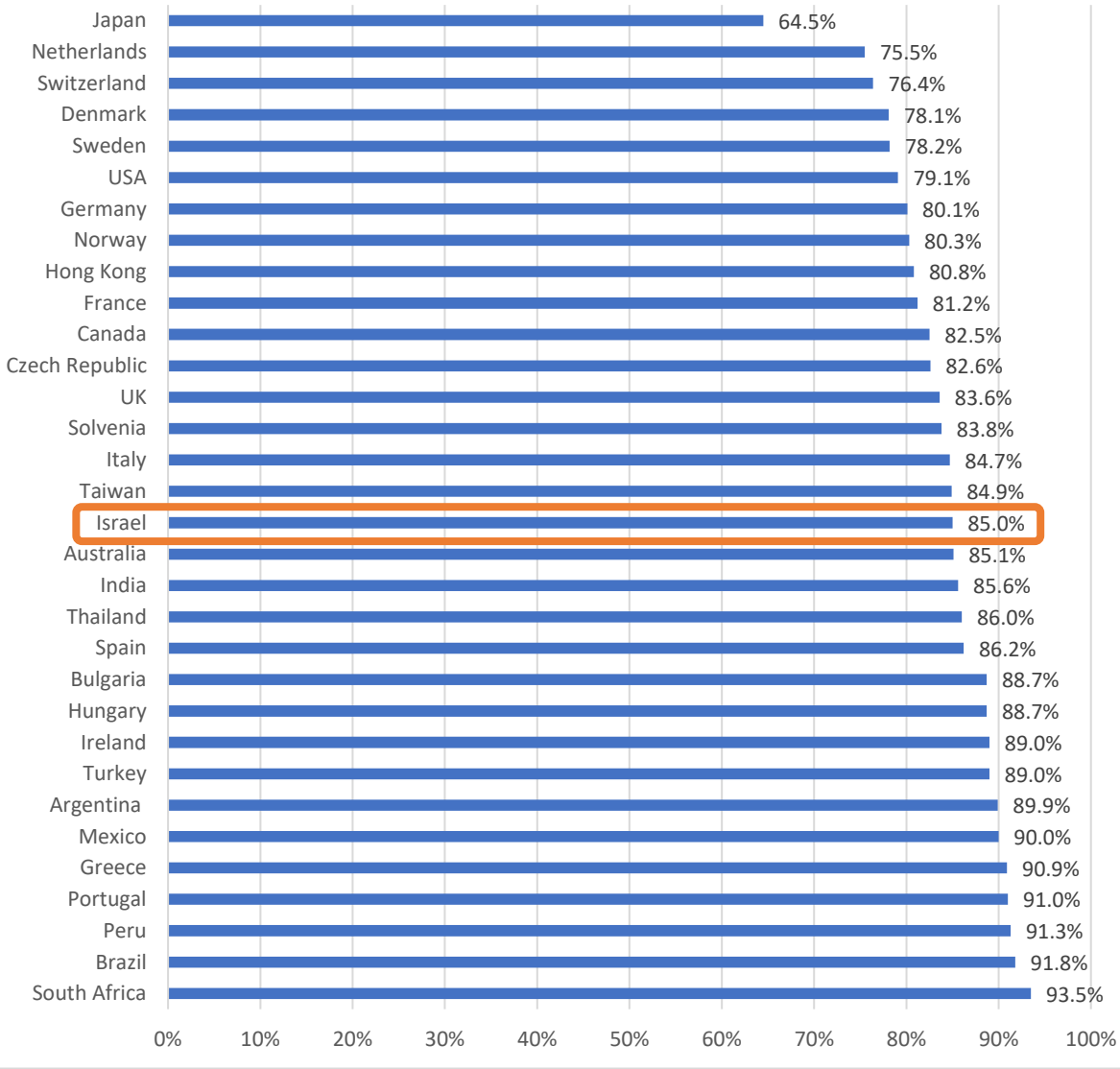


Chart 8. Percentage of respondents in Israel who agree there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early, by age

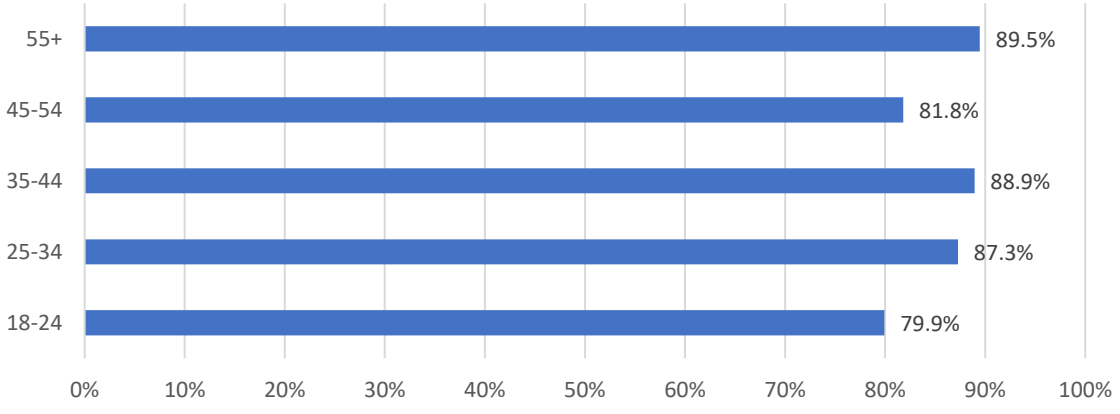
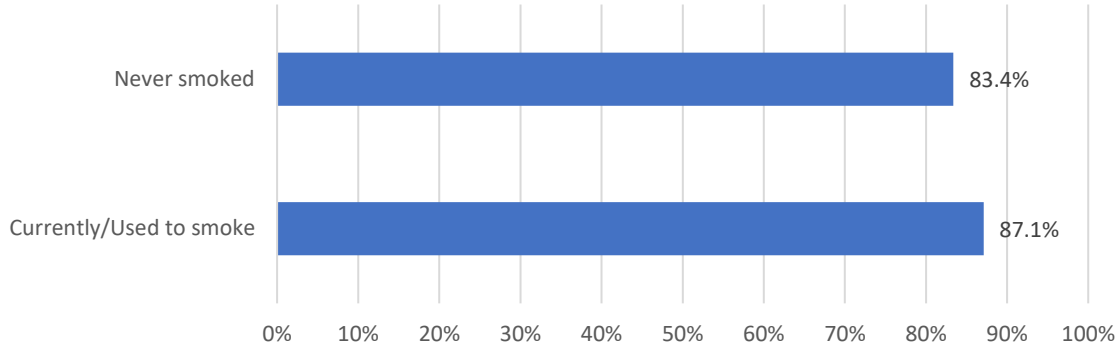


Chart 9. Percentage of respondents in Israel who agree there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early, by smoking status



Conclusion

The 2026 findings highlight several important challenges and opportunities for improving lung cancer outcomes in Israel. One-third of respondents (33.9%) were unable to identify any symptoms of lung cancer, although this was down substantially from 50.3% in 2023. Lack of symptom awareness was particularly high among younger adults and people who had never smoked.

Stigma surrounding lung cancer also remains an important issue. Almost half of respondents (45.9%) reported having less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for those with other types of cancer. While this was down from 50.8% in 2023, it remains above the 2026 global average of 39.2%, highlighting the importance of continued efforts to challenge misconceptions, blame and stigma associated with the disease.

Public support for lung cancer screening is strong, with 85.0% of respondents supporting a national screening programme, up from 82.1% in 2023. Alongside Israel's experience of piloting lung cancer screening among people at high risk of the disease, this demonstrates strong public backing for efforts to improve access to earlier detection and diagnosis.

Together, these findings highlight the importance of continued action to improve symptom awareness, challenge stigma and misconceptions, and build on existing screening initiatives to support earlier diagnosis and improve outcomes for people affected by lung cancer in Israel.

More information

Established in 2001, the GLCC comprises 44 non-government patient organisations from 32 nations / territories: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, UK and USA.

The GLCC promotes global understanding of lung cancer and the right of patients to effective early detection, better treatment and supportive care. By serving as the international voice of lung cancer patients, the GLCC is committed to improving disease outcomes for all.

For more information about this study and the work of the GLCC please visit: www.lungcancercoalition.org or email our secretariat at: glcc@roycastle.org.