GLOBAL LUNG CANCER COALITION

Mexico 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 Mexico in 2026 and how they compare with other countries included in the survey. The results highlight three key themes:

- **Awareness of lung cancer symptoms is relatively high**, with Mexico ranking among the better-performing countries in the survey for symptom recognition, although almost a third of people were still unable to identify a symptom of lung cancer.
- **Levels of stigma towards people with lung cancer remain significant**, with more than four in ten respondents reporting less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for those with other types of cancer, placing Mexico above the global average.
- **Public support for lung cancer screening is very strong**, with Mexico recording one of the highest levels of support among all countries included in the survey.

Key findings: Mexico

Symptom recognition

- Almost a **third** of people responding to the survey (**32.3%**) said they did not know any symptoms of lung cancer, down slightly from **33.4%** in **2023**.
- Men were more likely than women to report not knowing any symptoms (**36.5% vs. 29.1%**).
- People **aged 18-24** were most likely to report not knowing any symptoms (**38.1%**), compared with **27.6%** of those **aged 35-44**.
- People who had never smoked were more likely than those who currently smoke or had smoked previously to report not knowing any symptoms (**40.2% vs. 28.8%**).

Attitudes towards lung cancer

- **Four in ten** respondents (**40.4%**) agreed with the statement: *"I have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for people with other types of cancer"*. This is up slightly from **39.8%** in **2023** and above the **global average** of **39.2%**.

- Men were more likely than women to hold this view (**42.3% vs. 39%**).
- People **aged 25-34** were most likely to agree with this statement (**48.1%**), while people **aged 55 and over** were least likely (**23.2%**).
- People who currently smoke or had smoked previously were slightly more likely than those who had never smoked to report less sympathy towards people with lung cancer (**41.3% vs. 38.7%**).

Views on lung cancer screening

- **Nine in ten** respondents (**90%**) agreed there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early. This is down slightly from **93.1%** in **2023.**
- Women were less supportive than men (**89.2% vs. 91%**).
- Support was highest among people **aged 55 and over** (**92.6%**).
- People who currently smoke or had smoked previously were more supportive than those who had never smoked (**91.7% vs. 86.9%**).

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 Mexico 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, 32.3% of people in Mexico said they did not know any symptoms of lung cancer. This is slightly below the 2026 global average of 32.7% and places Mexico around the middle of the countries included in the survey for symptom awareness. Nevertheless, almost one in three respondents were 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, back pain, loss of appetite, and recurrent respiratory infections, although these were less commonly recognised.

The findings suggest that awareness in Mexico 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

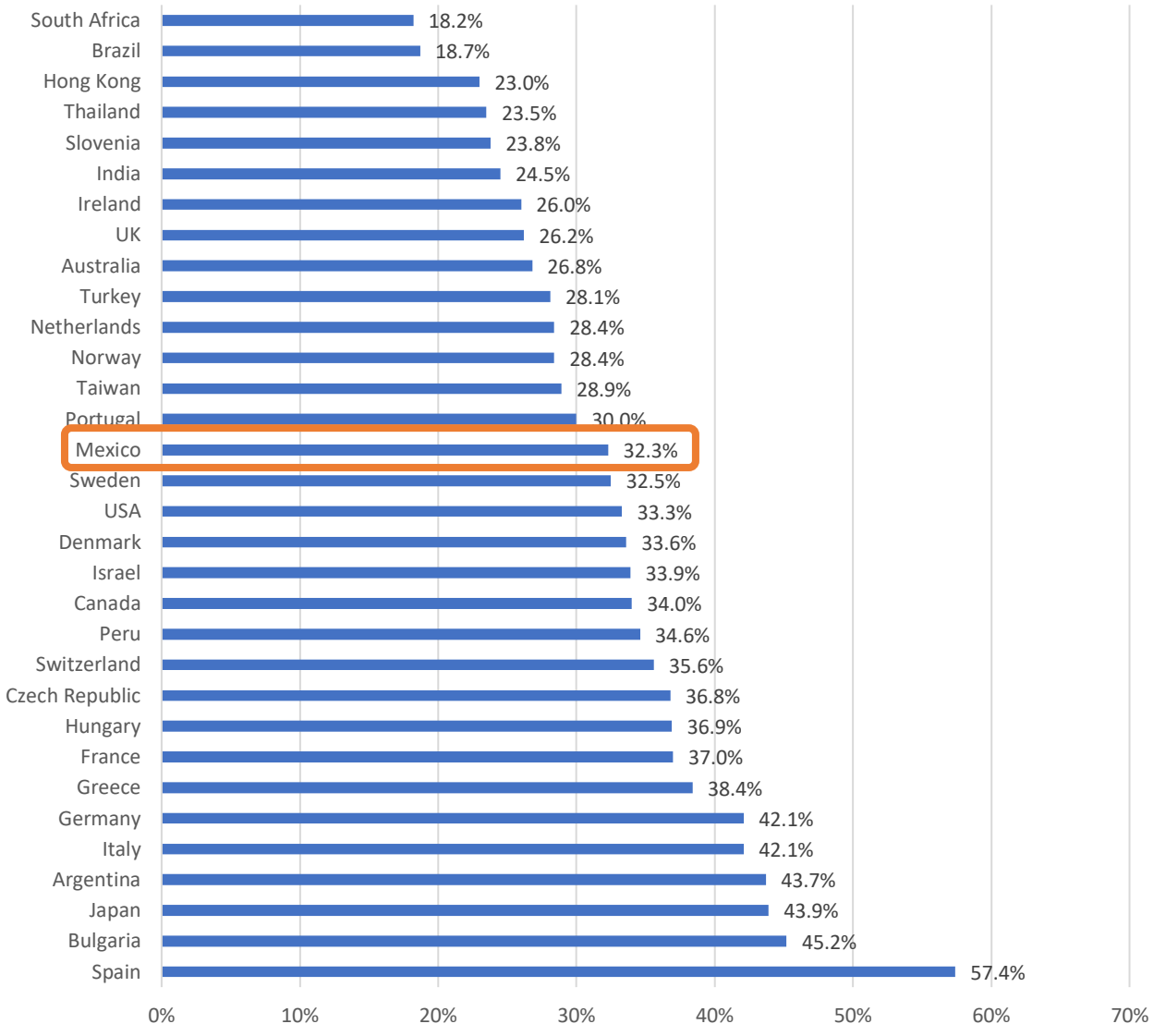


Chart 2. Percentage of respondents in Mexico who indicated they did not know any symptoms, by age

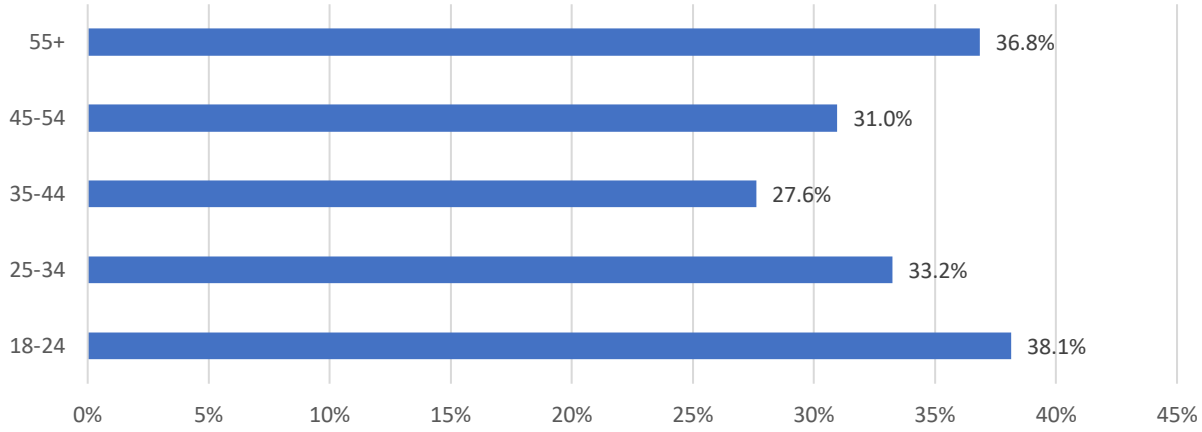
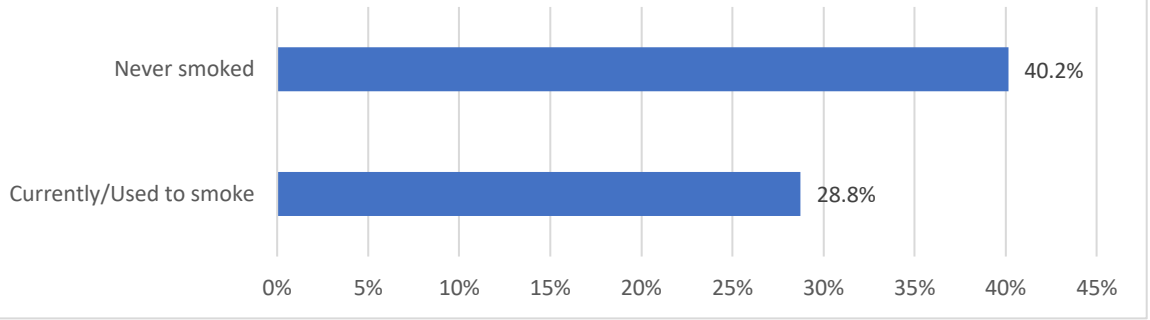


Chart 3. Percentage of respondents in Mexico who indicated they did not know any symptoms of smoking, by status



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 Mexico, 40.4% of respondents agreed with the statement that they have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for people with other types of cancer. This is higher than the 2026 global average of 39.2% and indicates that stigma remains a significant challenge. These findings reinforce the need for continued efforts to improve understanding of lung cancer and reduce blame and misconceptions 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

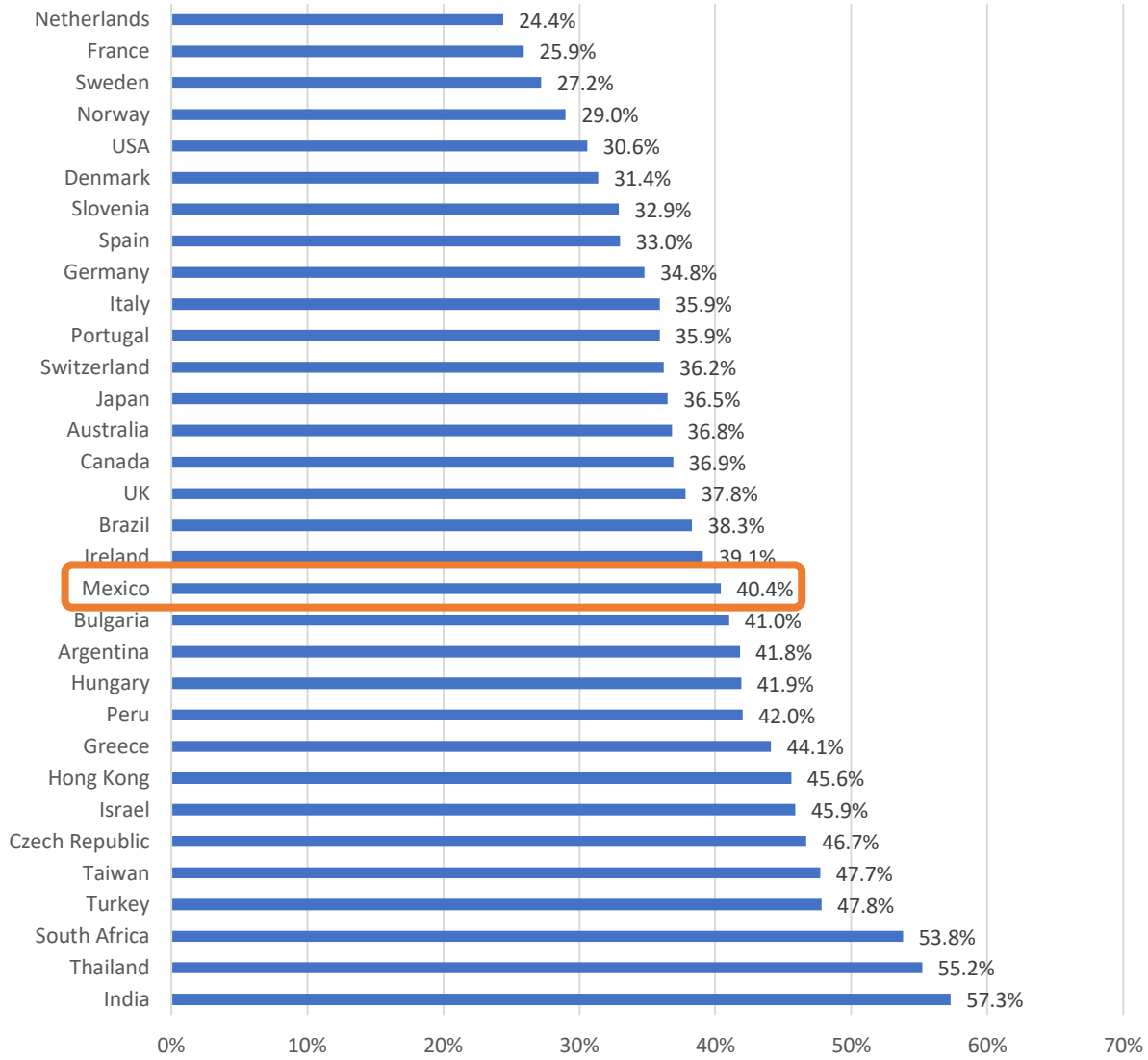


Chart 5. Percentage of respondents in Mexico who agree with the statement they have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for other types of cancer, by age

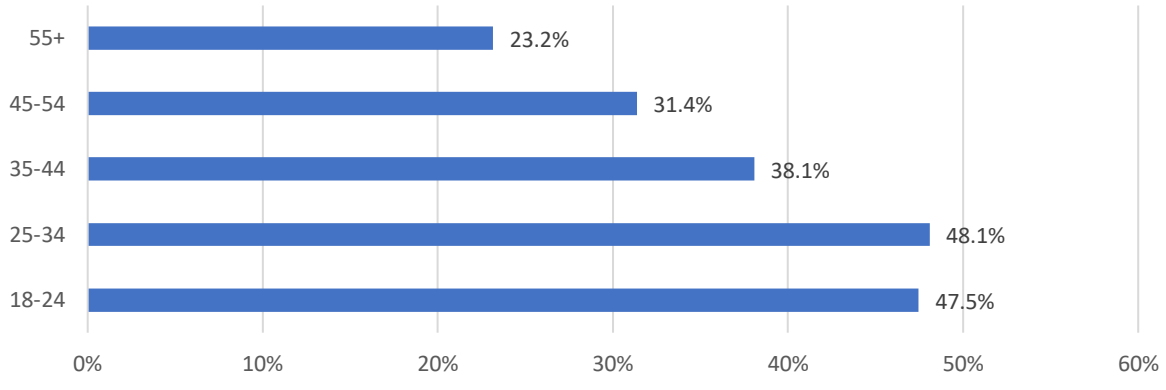
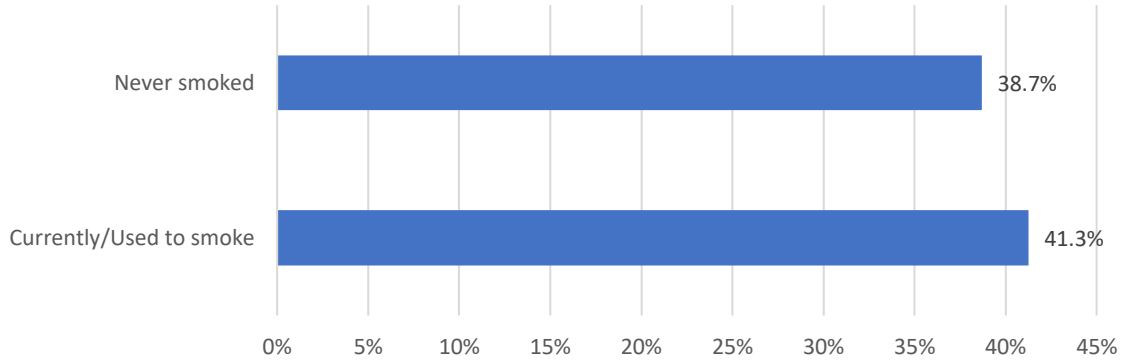


Chart 6. Percentage of respondents in Mexico who agree with the statement they have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for other types of cancer, by smoking status



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 exceptionally strong in Mexico, with 90.0% of respondents agreeing that there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early. Mexico ranked among the highest-performing countries in the survey.

Mexico does not currently have a national lung cancer screening programme.[3] Given the strong public support identified in this survey and the growing evidence base for lung cancer screening, there is a significant opportunity to expand access to early detection initiatives and help more people receive a diagnosis at an earlier, more treatable stage.

[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] IASLC. Lung cancer care in Mexico. Available at: https://www.iaslc.org/file/12244/download?token=0o-2n9a1

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

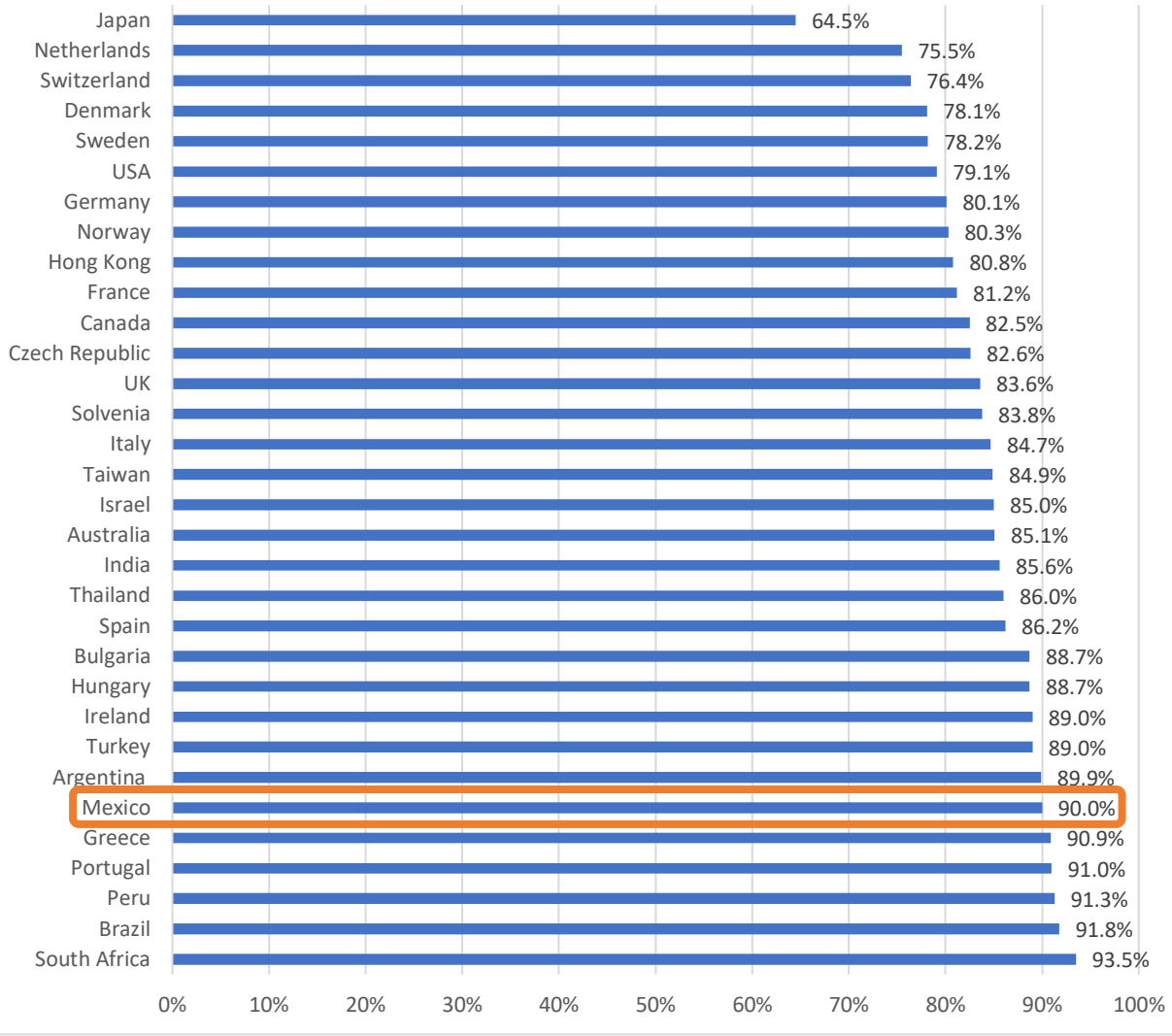


Chart 8. Percentage of respondents in Mexico who agree there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early, by age

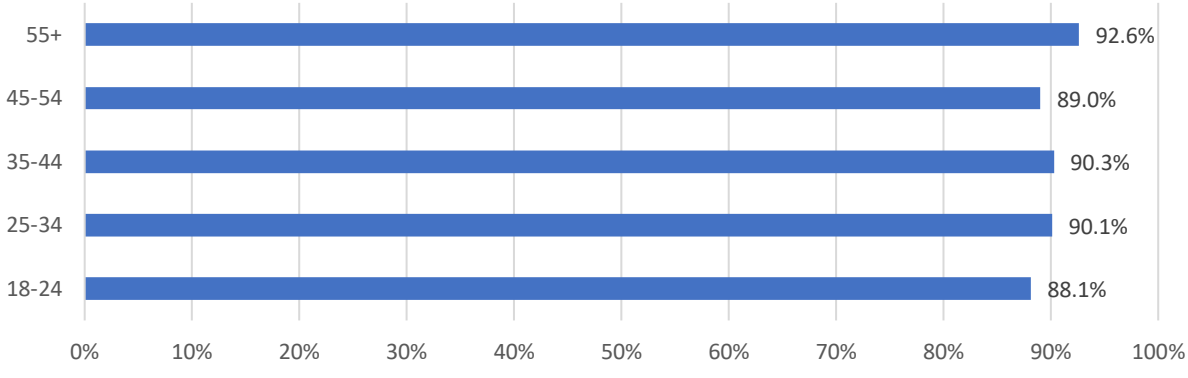
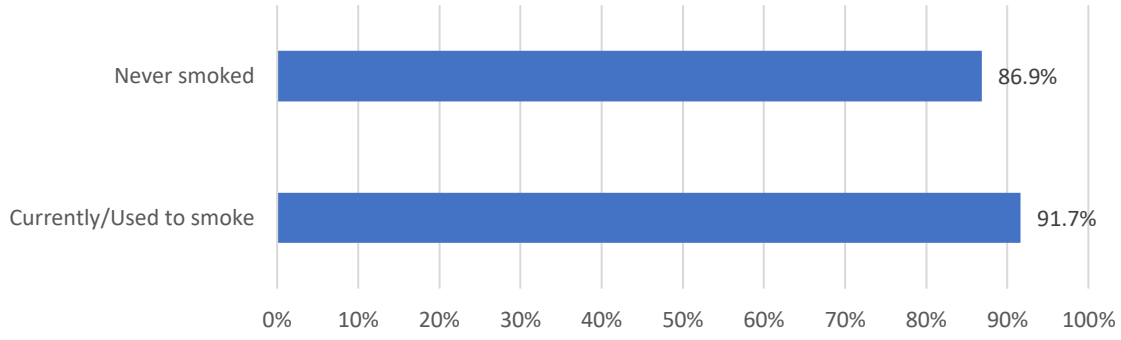


Chart 9. Percentage of respondents in Mexico who agree there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early, by smoking status



Conclusion

The 2026 findings show that Mexico performs relatively well on symptom awareness and records very strong public support for lung cancer screening, but important challenges remain. Awareness of lung cancer symptoms is stronger than in many countries included in the survey, although 32.3% of people were still unable to identify a single symptom of lung cancer.

At the same time, stigma surrounding lung cancer remains a concern, with 40.4% of respondents reporting less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for those with other cancers, a figure that is above the global average.

Public support for lung cancer screening is among the strongest seen across all countries included in the survey, with 90.0% of respondents supporting a national screening programme. This demonstrates strong public backing for efforts to improve earlier diagnosis and reduce the burden of lung cancer.

These findings highlight the need for continued investment in public awareness, action to challenge stigma and misconceptions, and ongoing efforts to improve access to early detection and diagnosis. The GLCC will use these findings to support advocacy and awareness activities aimed at improving outcomes for everyone affected by lung cancer in Mexico.

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.