GLOBAL LUNG CANCER COALITION

Taiwan 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 Taiwan 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 low, with almost three in ten respondents reporting that they did not know any symptoms of lung cancer.
- **Levels of stigma** towards people with lung cancer remain high, with almost half of respondents reporting less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for those with other types of cancer, exceeding the global average.
- **Public support for lung cancer screening** is strong, with more than eight in ten respondents supporting a national lung cancer screening programme to help diagnose people earlier.

Key findings: Taiwan

Symptom recognition

- Almost **three in ten** (**28.9%**) said they did not know any symptoms of lung cancer.
- Women were slightly more likely to report not knowing any symptoms compared to men (**29.0% vs. 28.8%**).
- People aged 18-24 were most likely to report not knowing any symptoms (**34.5%**).
- People who currently smoke/have smoked were less likely to report not knowing any symptoms compared to people who have never smoked (**23.9% vs. 32.7%**).

Attitudes towards lung cancer

- Almost **half** of people (**47.7%**) agreed with the statement "I have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than other types of cancer"; this compares to 39.2% globally.
- Men had less sympathy for people with lung cancer than women (**55.2% vs. 36.1%**).
- People aged 35-44 had the least sympathy for people with lung cancer compared with other types of cancer, while people aged 45-54 had the most sympathy (**50.5% agreed vs 41.1% agreed**).
- People who currently smoke/have smoked were less sympathetic than people who have never smoked (**53.2% vs. 42.6%** agreeing they had less sympathy).

Views on lung cancer screening

- More than **eight in ten** of people (**84.9%**) agreed there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early.
- Men were more likely to support the need for lung cancer screening programmes than women (**85.0% vs. 84.7%**).
- Support varied with age, highest among 45–54 year-olds (**88.4%**) and lowest among those aged 55 and over (**80.0%**).
- People who currently smoke/have smoked were more supportive of lung cancer screening programmes than people who have never smoked (**88.8% vs. 81.6%**).

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 at least 1,000 adults (per country) 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 vital because treatment is more likely to be successful if lung cancer is diagnosed early.

The study found that 28.9% of people in Taiwan said they did not know any symptoms of lung cancer. This represents a modest improvement since 2023, when 33.4% reported not knowing any symptoms, suggesting that public awareness may be gradually improving. However, more than one in four people remain unable to identify any symptoms, highlighting the continued need for awareness campaigns that encourage people to recognise potential warning signs and seek medical advice promptly.

While 28.9% of people reported not knowing any symptoms of lung cancer, analysis of the open-response data shows that those who could identify symptoms tended to name the most important warning signs. Coughs, coughing up blood, difficulty breathing, chest pain and excess phlegm dominated responses, suggesting that public awareness is concentrated around the key symptoms most commonly highlighted in health awareness campaigns.

Compared with other countries included in the survey, Taiwan continues to demonstrate relatively strong symptom awareness, ranking above the cross-country average, with a comparatively low proportion of respondents unable to identify any symptoms. Nevertheless, awareness remains far from universal, and significant opportunities remain to improve understanding of lung cancer symptoms among the wider public.

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

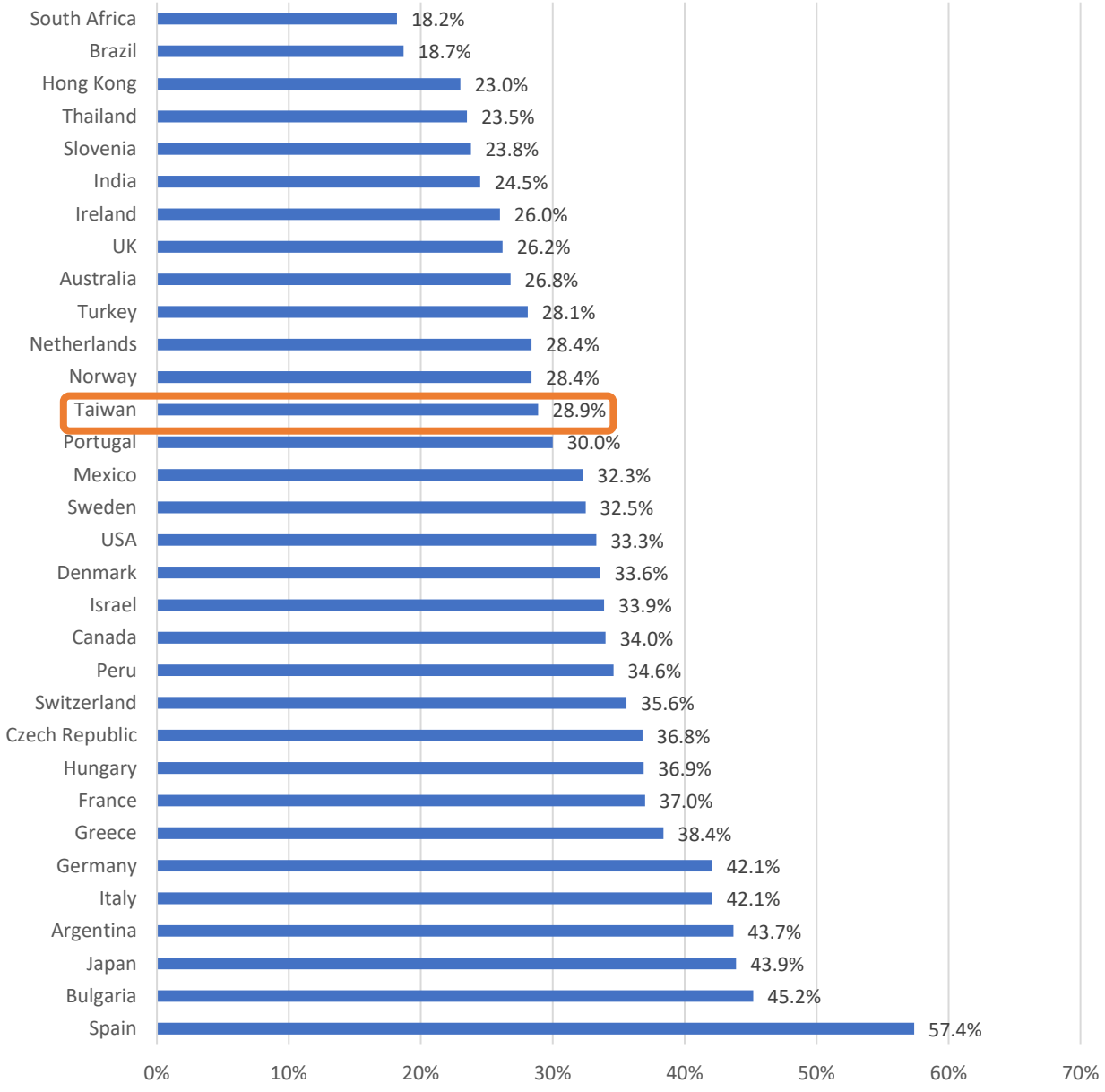


Chart 2: Percentage of respondents in Taiwan who indicated they did not know any symptoms by age

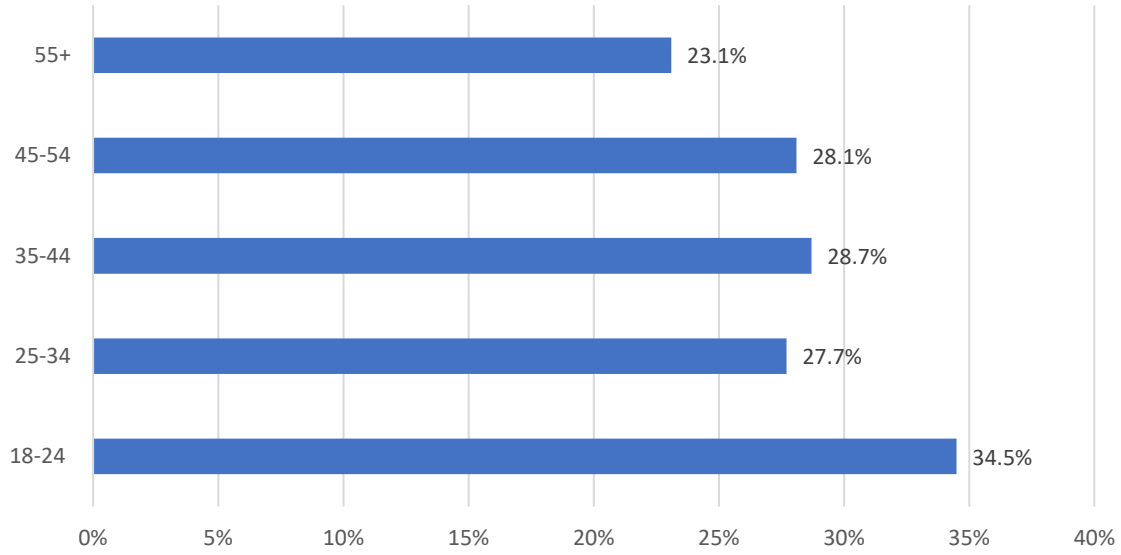
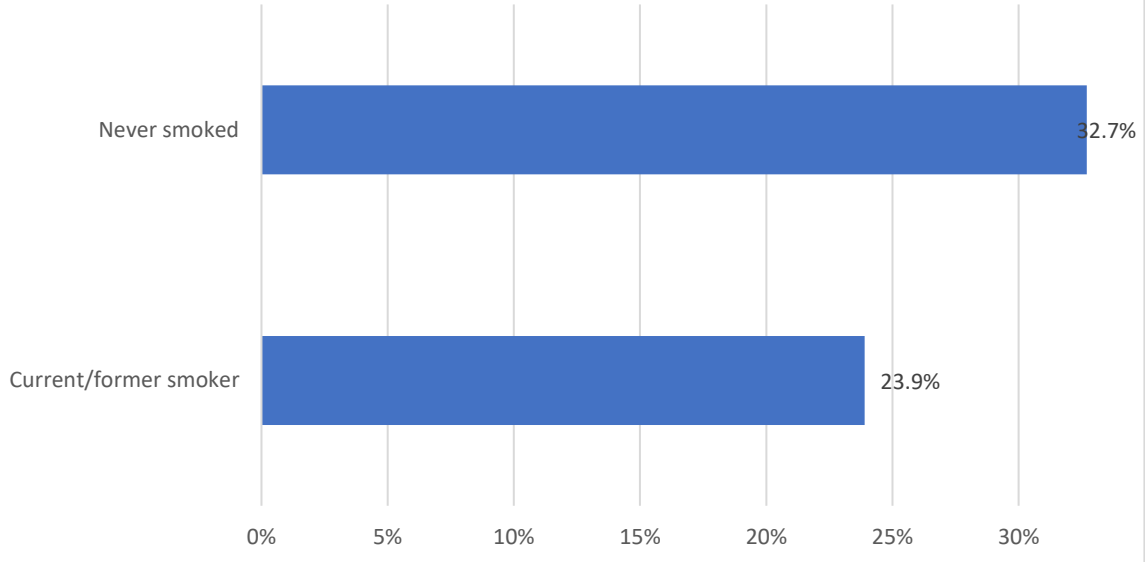


Chart 3. Percentage of respondents in Taiwan who indicated they did not know any symptoms by smoking status



Attitudes towards lung cancer

More than eight out of ten cases of lung cancer are linked to smoking creating stigma around the disease. This is a problem not only because thousands of people develop lung cancer who have never smoked, but also because people who have smoked may feel guilty and delay talking their doctor about potential symptoms.

The GLCC believes that everyone - no matter what the cause of their cancer - deserves to have high quality treatment and care. No one deserves to have lung cancer. If lung cancer can be picked up early then it improves people's chance of successful treatment and survival.

In Taiwan, 47.7% of respondents agreed with the statement that they have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for other types of cancer. Although this accounts for almost half of the population, it is an improvement on 2023, when 57.2% agreed with the statement. This suggests attitudes towards lung cancer may be becoming more understanding over time.

Taiwan ranks 5th highest for stigma internationally (47.7%), among the countries with the highest levels of stigma. The findings show that misconceptions and stigma surrounding lung cancer remain significant challenges and reinforce the need for ongoing public education efforts.

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

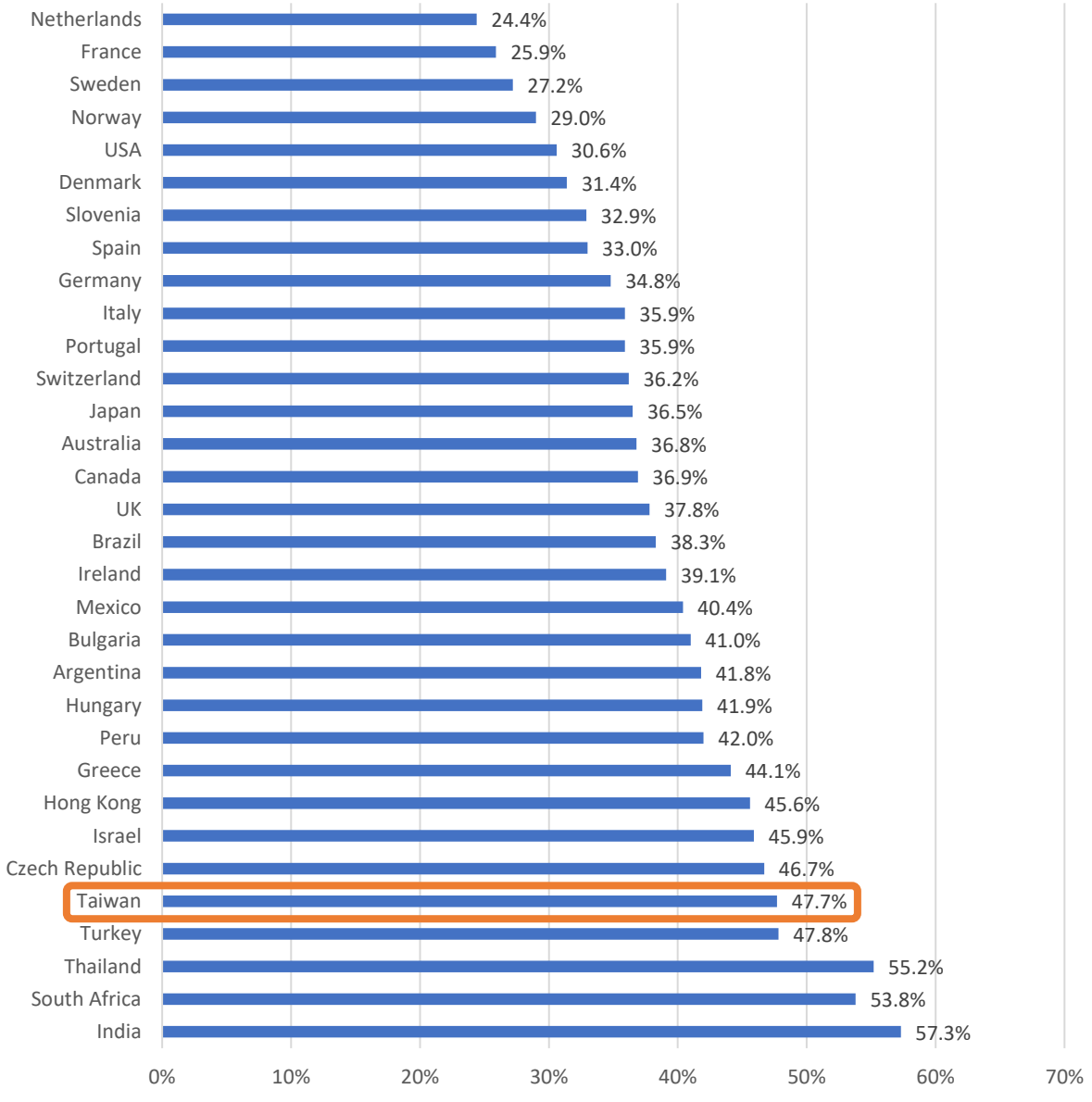


Chart 5. Percentage of respondents in Taiwan who agree with the statement they have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for other types of cancer by age

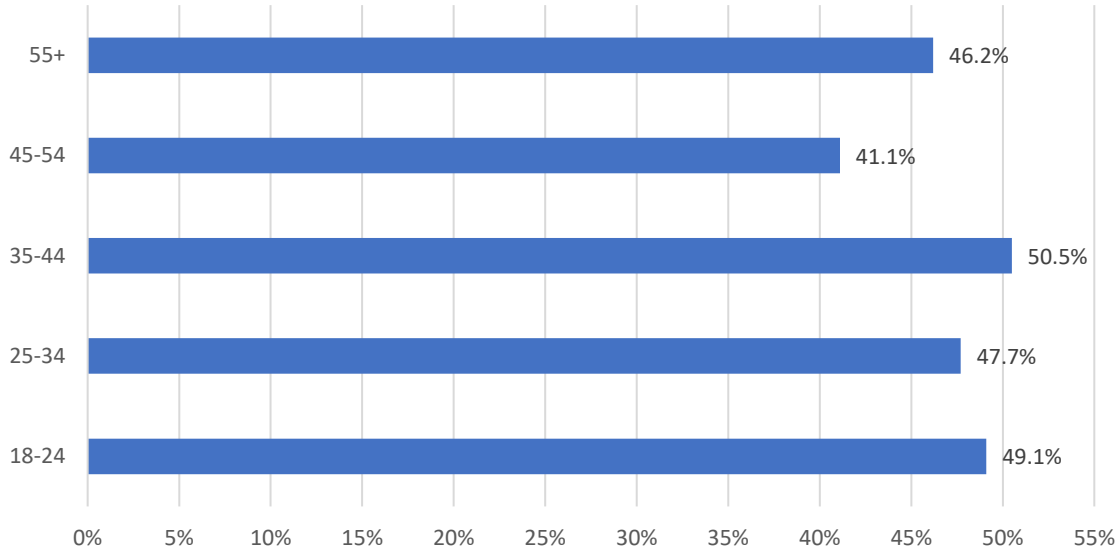
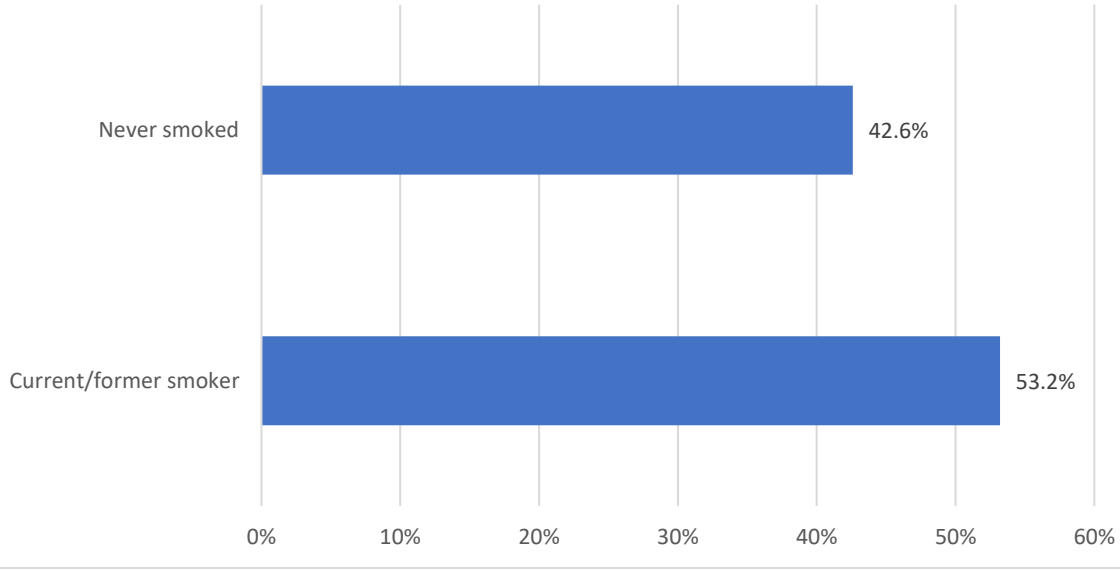


Chart 6. Percentage of respondents in Taiwan who agree with the statement they have less sympathy for people with lung cancer than for other types of cancer by smoking status



Views on lung cancer screening

A national lung cancer screening programme is a key measure to reduce the huge burden that the disease currently imposes on the individuals affected, their families and the country and healthcare system as a whole.

Lung cancer screening with a non-invasive scan of the lungs (low-dose computed tomography [LDCT]) saves lives by detecting the disease at an early stage when it is potentially curable. A large clinical trial of LDCT screening showed a 24% reduction in lung cancer mortality in men and a 33% reduction in women at 10 years of follow-up compared to no screening (de Koning 2020).

Support for lung cancer screening remains very strong in Taiwan, with 84.9% of respondents agreeing that there should be a national screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early. Although this represents a slight decrease from 86.5% in 2023, public support remains overwhelmingly high, with more than four in five people backing screening.

At present only a few countries have national lung cancer screening programmes. Given the impact they can have and the support for them globally, the GLCC calls on policymakers around the world to implement national lung cancer screening programmes to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed as early as possible.

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

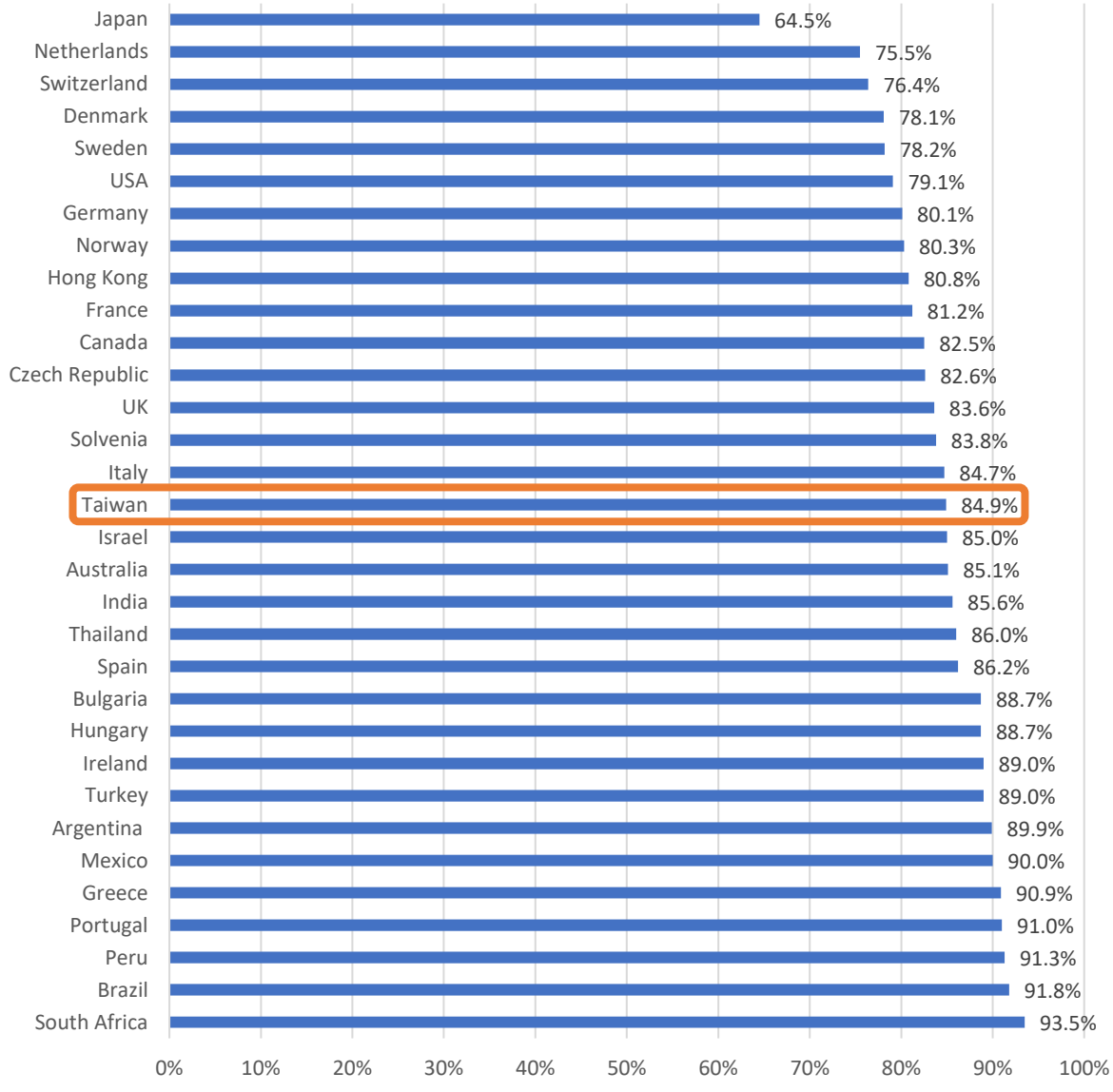


Chart 8. Percentage of respondents in Taiwan who agree there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early by age

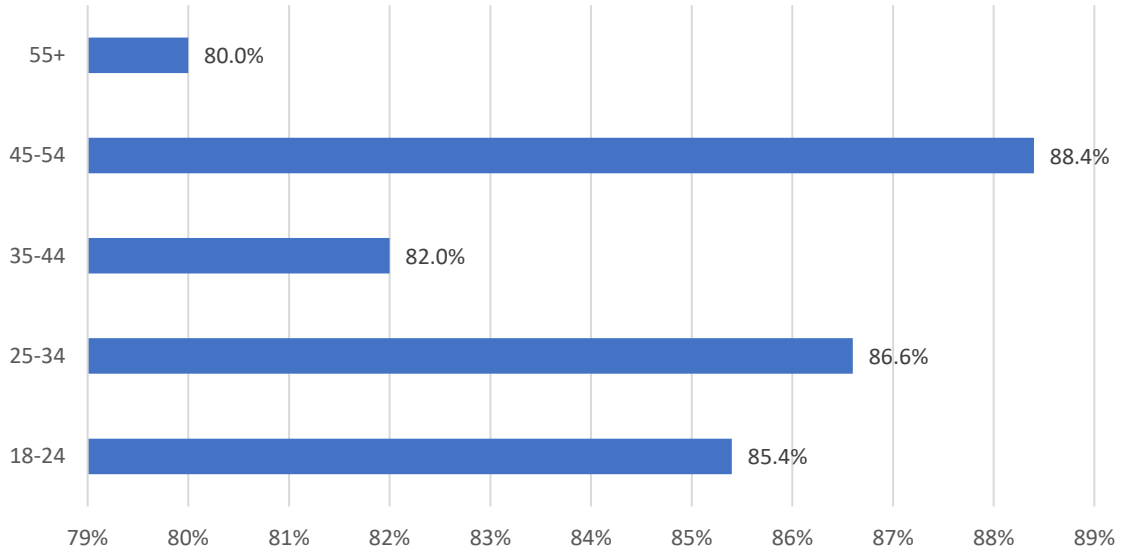
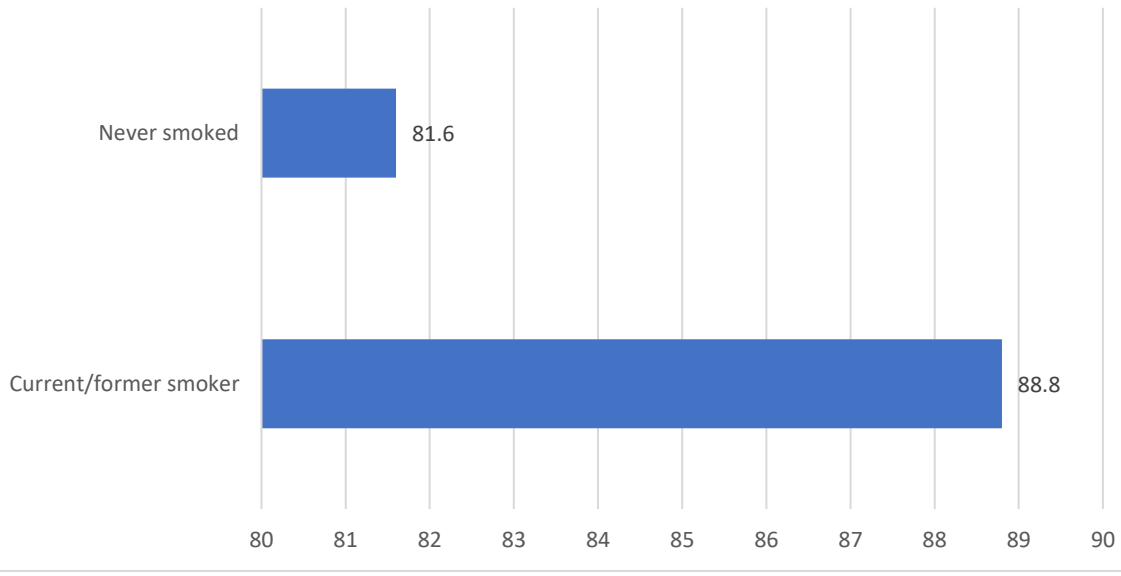


Chart 9. Percentage of respondents in Taiwan who agree there should be a national lung cancer screening programme to help people with lung cancer get diagnosed early by smoking status



Conclusion

Awareness of lung cancer symptoms in Taiwan is comparatively strong, with fewer people unable to identify a symptom of lung cancer than in many other countries included in the survey. However, important knowledge gaps remain, particularly among younger adults and people who have never smoked, highlighting the need for continued public education and awareness initiatives.

Attitudes towards people living with lung cancer present a more significant challenge. Nearly half of respondents reported feeling less sympathy towards people with lung cancer than those with other forms of cancer, placing Taiwan among the countries with the highest reported levels of stigma in the survey. Addressing misconceptions about lung cancer and its causes will be important to reducing stigma and encouraging people affected by the disease to seek support and care.

Public support for lung cancer screening is strong, with more than four in five respondents supporting a national screening programme. This provides a strong foundation for efforts to promote earlier diagnosis and improve outcomes for people at risk of lung cancer.

Overall, the findings suggest an opportunity to build on Taiwan's relatively strong symptom awareness by tackling persistent stigma and supporting participation in screening and early detection initiatives. Strengthening public understanding of lung cancer and encouraging timely help-seeking could help improve outcomes for people affected by the disease across Taiwan.

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.