In order to compare survival rates in Japan with those in the USA and European countries, we abstracted the 5-year relative survival rate from several data sources. Survival rates of cancer diagnosed in 1995–99 in the USA were abstracted from 18 cancer registries in the Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) data (1). Survival rates of cancer diagnosed in 1995–99 in the UK and Norway were obtained from three cancer registries (Norway, the UK: Northern Ireland, the UK: Scotland and the UK: Wales) in the European Network of Cancer Registries data (2), and the rate of cancer diagnosed in 2000–02 in Japan was reported from six cancer registries (Miyagi, Yamagata, Niigata, Fukui, Osaka and Nagasaki) in the monitoring of cancer incidence in Japan (MCIJ) project (3). Here, we compared the survival rate of stomach cancer coded as C16 (ICD10). Figure 1 shows the 5-year relative survival rate of stomach cancer by age category for males; Fig. 2 shows these data for females.

The 5-year relative survival rates for males across all age groups were about the same as those for females. The rates for both sexes slightly decrease as the patients age. Males and females showed different trends. The survival rates declined constantly according to age for males, while the survival rates for females remain at the same level until the age group 65–74 years, then fell rapidly after the age 75 years. The survival rate in Japan was clearly higher than those in the other countries for both sexes; the rates ranged from 50% to 70%. The other countries showed a similar trend; the rates ranged from 10% to 30%.

The high survival rate for Japanese patients could be related to the organized stomach cancer screening and abundant experience in treatment according to the high incidence rate in the country.

Note: Data were downloaded from the SEER Program (www.seer.cancer.gov) SEER*Stat Database, IARC CANCER Mondial Statistical Information System (http://www-dep.iarc.fr/) and MCIJ database. Responsibility for this presentation and interpretation lies with the authors of this article.
References

