

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Department of Health and Aged Care**

**Senate Community Affairs References Committee**

**Inquiry into Excess Mortality**

**13 June 2024**

**PDR Number:**

**Fast growing cancer**

**Written**

**Senator:** Malcolm Roberts

**Question:**

1. The phrase 'turbo cancer' has been in use to describe fast growing cancers, a term which is unscientific and not a recognised medical term. I understand it has been rejected by your Department, is this correct?
2. A review of medical literature however does accept that some cancers grow faster than others, is there a term for a 'fast growing cancer' that your Department would accept, or is 'fast growing cancers' acceptable?

**Answer:**

The Department of Health and Aged Care does not use the term turbo cancer as it is not a recognised pathological or medical term.

Fast-growing cancer is an accepted medical term that refers to aggressive, high-grade or virulent cancer.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare glossary of cancer terms defines virulence as 'the ability of cancer to cause damage to its host'. A virulent cancer is fast-growing and invasive. These cancers are also referred to as 'aggressive'.

A non-virulent or less-virulent cancer is slower-growing and less likely to be invasive or metastasise. A slow-growing cancer may be referred to as 'indolent'.

The full glossary of cancer terms is available at [www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/health-conditions-disability-deaths/cancer/glossary](http://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/health-conditions-disability-deaths/cancer/glossary).