

Health Insurance Coverage Linked to Earlier Diagnosis, Faster Treatment, and Longer Survival Among Men With Breast Cancer, Study Finds

American Cancer Society-led research to be presented at the 2026 ASCO Quality Care Symposium

Key takeaways:

- Men with private health insurance were more likely to be diagnosed earlier, start treatment sooner, and live longer.
- Men without insurance coverage waited longer to begin treatment over time, even though nearly all ultimately received care.
- Findings point to opportunities to improve access to timely, high-quality cancer care for men with breast cancer.

ASCO Quality Care Symposium Abstract #212/Poster Board #F10/Session B

(Temporal trends and correlates of stage at diagnosis, receipt of treatment, and survival among men newly diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States)

ATLANTA, October 12, 2026 — Men with breast cancer face systemic medical and social barriers that can affect how quickly they get diagnosed and receive high-quality care. Now, in a new, large study led by the [American Cancer Society](#) (ACS), researchers reveal that health insurance coverage is linked with the stage at which breast cancer was diagnosed, how fast treatment began, and survival among men in the United States. Race and ethnicity, neighborhood poverty, and the type of facility providing care were also associated with these outcomes. The findings will be presented at the annual [American Society of Clinical Oncology \(ASCO\) Quality Care Symposium](#) in Boston, October 16-17, 2026.

“This is very concerning as our findings reveal health insurance is a key factor in access to critical cancer care for men with breast cancer,” said [Dr. Jingxuan Zhao](#), principal scientist, health services research at the American Cancer Society and senior author of the study. “People in this patient population without adequate coverage may experience delays in screening, diagnosis, and treatment, which can contribute to later-stage diagnoses and poorer outcomes.”

About 2,670 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer, and an estimated 530 men will die of the disease in the U.S. this year. Male breast cancer can occur at any age. While the overall risk is low, it goes up as men get older. The average age at the time of diagnosis is between 60 and 70 years. For men, the average lifetime risk of getting breast cancer is about 1 in 755, but each man's risk might be higher or lower, based on whether he has certain risk factors.

ACS researchers identified 26,969 men age 18 and older diagnosed with stages 0-IV breast cancer between 2004 and 2023 from the National Cancer Database. Scientists examined trends in stage at diagnosis, treatment, and survival over time, as well as key characteristics associated with these outcomes.

The study found that the number of men who began treatment within 30 days of diagnosis declined substantially, from 76% in 2004 to 36% in 2022. Men without private health insurance were less likely to be diagnosed at an early stage, more likely to experience treatment delays, and had worse survival than men with private insurance. The report also found differences in diagnosis, treatment, and survival by race and ethnicity, area-level poverty, and facility type.

“Expanding access to care and reducing barriers to timely treatment could help improve outcomes for men with breast cancer,” Zhao added. “Also, more research is needed that specifically includes men. The disease is often treated using recommendations that were developed primarily from breast cancer studies in women.”

Vincent Nguyen is lead author of the paper. Other ACS researchers contributing to this study include [Dr. Xuesong](#)

[Han, Nova Yang, MSPH](#), and [Dr. Robin Yabroff](#).

Additional ACS Resources:

- [Breast Cancer in Men](#)
- [Breast Cancer Survival Rates in Men](#)
- [Breast Cancer Statistics Report](#)

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About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a leading cancer-fighting organization with a vision to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. For more than 110 years, we have been improving the lives of people with cancer and their families as the only organization combating cancer through advocacy, research, and patient support. We are committed to ensuring everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. To learn more, visit cancer.org or call our 24/7 helpline at 1-800-227-2345. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#).

For further information: American Cancer Society, Jennifer.Tan@cancer.org or Anne.Doerr@cancer.org

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