New Study Shows People With Advanced Cancers More Likely to Use Palliative Care if Providers are Close to Home

The American Cancer Society led research to be presented at the 2023 ASCO Quality Care Symposium

ATLANTA, October 28, 2023 - A new study from researchers at the American Cancer Society (ACS) found that adults in the United States with stage IV cancer living in nonmetropolitan, socioeconomically deprived areas, the southern U.S., or being treated at community facilities had lower accessibility to palliative care physicians than their counterparts in other areas. Patients who had higher geographic accessibility to palliative care providers were more likely to receive the care in both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. These findings will be presented at the annual American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Quality Care Symposium in Boston, October 27 – 28, 2023.

In the study, researchers, led by Qinjin Fan, senior scientist, health services research at the American Cancer Society, used data from the National Cancer Database to find records of more than 333,000 adults newly diagnosed with stage IV cancer in 2018 and 2019 in the contiguous U.S. These records were combined with data on the locations of Medicare physicians who specialize in hospice and palliative care to determine accessibility. Researchers then looked at data showing whether palliative treatments were received.

Researchers suggest that the overall low receipt of this recommended care may potentially reflect inadequate access to palliative care providers nationwide. They emphasized that these findings support the need for strategies to increase the number of palliative care physicians, especially in rural and socioeconomically deprived areas, to enhance the accessibility of guideline-recommended palliative care.

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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 100 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, Twitter, and Instagram.

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