

Cancer Survivors With a Disability More Likely to Experience Medical Financial Hardship, New Research Shows

The American Cancer Society led research to be presented at the 2024 ASCO Quality Care Symposium

ASCO Quality Care Symposium Abstract #136 (Poster Board #D9)

MERIT AWARD

(The Association of Disability and Medical Financial Hardship among Cancer Survivors in the U.S.)

ATLANTA, September 23, 2024 — Medical financial hardship (MFH) in cancer survivors is well-documented; however, little is known about how having a disability is associated with healthcare needs and costs in cancer survivorship. A new study from researchers at the [American Cancer Society](#) (ACS) found that survivors of cancer with a disability were more likely to experience MFH, including problems paying bills and forgoing medical care due to cost. These findings will be presented at the annual [American Society of Clinical Oncology \(ASCO\) Quality Care Symposium](#) in San Francisco, September 27-28, 2024.

In the study, researchers, led by [Dr. Margaret Katana Ogongo](#), post-doctoral fellow, health services research at the American Cancer Society and lead author of the study, identified cancer survivors 18 years old and older with and without a disability from the National Health Interview Survey 2019 to 2022. The Washington Group Short Set, a validated six-item measure intended to describe the functional status of adults (e.g. disability in seeing, hearing, or walking) was used to identify those with disabilities. MFH was categorized into three domains: 1) material (e.g. problems paying medical bills), 2) psychological (e.g. worrying about medical bills), and 3) behavioral (e.g. delaying/forgoing care due to cost).

Study results show cancer survivors with a disability were more likely to experience any MFH (57.2% vs. 47.0%) or any individual domain (Material: 26.4% vs. 13.3%; Psychological: 50.5% vs. 43.0%; Behavioral: 23.2% vs. 12.9%) compared with those without a disability. In addition, survivors with a disability were more likely to report experiencing multiple domains of MFH (29.1% vs. 15.9%).

Researchers stress study findings can help initiate interventions to help alleviate MFH in this especially vulnerable population.

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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](#).

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