

Gallbladder Cancer Rises Among Black Americans as Cases Decline in Other Groups

Study found gallbladder cancer incidence rates have remained stable for white people, declined for Latinos and risen for Black people.

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Gallbladder cancer rates have been stable or declining for most Americans over the last two decades, but cases have steadily risen among Blacks, with growing numbers not being diagnosed until later stages, according to a study scheduled for presentation at [Digestive Disease Week \(DDW\) 2024](#).

“Gallbladder cancer diagnosis at late stage can be highly detrimental,” said lead author Yazan Abboud, MD, internal medicine resident at Rutgers University New Jersey Medical School. “This could be due to a lack of timely access to healthcare leading to delayed diagnosis. Non-Hispanic Blacks have been lacking in improvement in the mortality of gallbladder cancer compared to other racial and ethnic groups, who experienced declining mortality.”

Researchers analyzed records for 76,873 patients diagnosed with gallbladder cancer from 2001 to 2020 in the U.S. Cancer Statistics database, which covers nearly 98% of the U.S. population. The study found gallbladder cancer incidence rates were stable among whites and declined at an average annual rate of .64% among Hispanics, while rates rose for non-Hispanic Blacks. Overall cancer rates among Blacks increased by an average of 1.03% per year, and the incidence of late-stage tumors increased at an average annual rate of 2.7%.

Gallbladder cancer is one of the most aggressive malignancies, with a five-year survival rate of 19%, and is most often diagnosed at later stages, with 41.3% of cancers in the study found in late stages, including 43.7% of cancers in Blacks compared to 40.8% in white patients and 41.1% of cases among Hispanics.

Gallbladder cancer has few to no symptoms in early stages. In late stages, symptoms include abdominal pain or bloating, unexplained weight loss and yellow skin and eyes.

Among early-stage tumors, which represented 12.9% of overall cases, the rates were decreasing only in Hispanics and were stable among Blacks and whites. For mid-stage tumors, which

represented 38.6% of overall cases, incidence rates declined for whites and were stable for Blacks and Hispanic people.

Abboud said future studies should investigate the reasons behind racial disparities in incidence of gallbladder cancer, especially the increasing trend of late-stage cancers in Blacks, with the goal of improving early detection.

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