

Racial disparities persist in the treatment of lung cancer

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Black patients suffering from lung cancer are less likely to receive recommended chemotherapy and surgery than white lung cancer patients, a disparity that shows no signs of lessening. That is the conclusion of a new study published in the May 15, 2009 issue of *CANCER*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society. The study's findings indicate that efforts are needed to provide appropriate treatments for black patients and to educate them about the value of those treatments.

Researchers led by Dale Hardy, Ph.D., of the University of Texas School of Public Health analyzed data from 83,101 [patients](#) 65 years old or older who were diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer, the most common type of lung cancer, between 1991 and 2002. They looked for racial differences in [treatment](#), the first attempt to address the changes in receipt of treatment over time for this disease.

The researchers found that for patients with early lung cancer, blacks were 37 percent less likely than whites to receive recommended surgery and 42 percent less likely to receive recommended [chemotherapy](#). For patients with later stage of the disease, blacks were 57 percent less likely to receive recommended chemotherapy than whites. Older patients, women, and those with lower [socioeconomic status](#) also experienced greater disparities in receiving treatment.

The study indicates that lung cancer treatment disparities were just as large in 2002 as they were in the early 1990s, despite efforts to address

inequalities in medical treatment. This study adds to a large and growing body of research indicating that significant steps are needed to ensure equal cancer-related care for all races. "Efforts should focus on the appropriate quality treatment and educating blacks on the value of having these treatments to reduce these disparities in receipt of treatment for non-small cell lung cancer," the authors write. Only then will black lung cancer patients experience similar [survival rates](#) and quality of life as white patients.

More information: "Racial disparities and treatment trends in a large cohort of elderly black and white patients with non-small cell [lung cancer](#)." Dale Hardy, Chih-Chin Liu, Rui Xia, Janice N. Cormier, Wenyaw Chan, Arica White, Keith Burau, and Xianglin L. Du. CANCER; Published Online: April 13, 2009 (DOI: 10.1002/cncr.24248); Print Issue Date: May 15, 2009.

Source: American Cancer Society ([news](#) : [web](#))

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