

# Older cancer patients have more frailty than other seniors

July 29 2009

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Older people with a history of cancer are more likely to have disabilities and be frail and vulnerable than older adults who have not had cancer, according to a study in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, published online July 29.

The prevalence of frailty and vulnerability among older [cancer](#) patients will pose an increasing challenge for physicians as the population ages. By the year 2030, persons who are older than 65 years are projected to make up 70% of cancer patients and have 65% of cancer deaths.

Supriya Gupta Mohile, M.D., from the James P. Wilmot Cancer Center at the University of Rochester in N.Y., and colleagues used data in the 2003 Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey to evaluate whether non-skin cancer was independently associated with vulnerability and frailty. They found that survey respondents with a history of non-skin cancer had statistically significantly more limitations in the activities of daily living and other measures of frailty and vulnerability than those who had not had cancer.

The authors conclude that their study "establishes the increased baseline prevalence of factors among cancer patients that have been associated with adverse health outcomes..." They also note that the study is "a first step in highlighting the importance of "staging the aging" (i.e., assessing factors that characterize physiological and functional capacity) among cancer patients by the use of geriatric assessment."

Source: [Journal of the National Cancer Institute](#) (news : web)

Citation: Older cancer patients have more frailty than other seniors (2009, July 29) retrieved 10 April 2024 from

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