

Hispanic lung cancer patients tend to live longer than blacks and whites

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A new analysis has found that Hispanic lung cancer patients seem to live longer than white or black patients. Published early online in *Cancer*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society, the study suggests that, as with several other types of cancer, certain yet-to-be-defined genetic and/or environmental factors put Hispanic patients at a survival advantage.

Most studies that look at ethnic and [racial disparities](#) in lung cancer compare black patients with whites. To see how Hispanics compare with other ethnicities with regards to survival after a lung cancer diagnosis, Ali Saeed, an MD/PhD candidate, and Brian Lally, MD, of the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, led a team that analyzed patient information from the Survival, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Database, which compiles incidence and survival data from population-based cancer registries in the United States.

The investigators identified 172,398 adult patients who were diagnosed with any stage of non-small cell lung cancer (the most common form of lung cancer) between 1988 and 2007.

Compared with white patients, [Hispanic patients](#) had a 15 percent lower risk of dying during the years of the study, whether they were born in the United States or not. "This is important because it shows that our findings are indicative of the [Hispanic population](#) in general and not specific to specific groups of Hispanics," said Saeed. Black patients were slightly more likely to die than whites. Also, Hispanics were more likely

to develop a lung [cancer type](#) called bronchioalveolar carcinoma that is not as serious or life-threatening as other types.

"Our findings will motivate researchers and physicians to understand why Hispanics have more favorable outcomes and may shed light on potential environmental factors and/or genetic factors that can explain our observations," said Saeed. "For instance, the fact that Hispanics developed higher frequencies of bronchioalveolar carcinoma could be due to genetic predispositions and/or their lower smoking rates." (Smokers are at increased risk for developing tumor types associated with a poor prognosis.)

Saeed noted that the results fit into a phenomenon known as the "Hispanic paradox," in which Hispanics tend to have more favorable outcomes after being diagnosed with certain diseases despite having socioeconomic factors (such as decreased access to health care and higher poverty rates) that would predict otherwise. This paradox is seen for breast cancer, prostate cancer, cardiovascular disease, and now non-small cell lung cancer.

Provided by Wiley

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