

# Marital status, race increase survival rate significantly for Stage III non-small cell lung cancer patients

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A study of survival data for Stage III, non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) patients at the University of Maryland's Greenebaum Cancer Center in Baltimore indicates that marital status and race can significantly impact patient survival rates, according to research presented at the 2012 Chicago Multidisciplinary Symposium in Thoracic Oncology. This symposium is sponsored by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO), the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC), and The University of Chicago.

This study reviewed the records of 168 patients with [Stage III](#) NSCLC who were treated with curative intent using chemotherapy and radiation at the Greenebaum Cancer Center from January 2000 to December 2010. The median survival rate for all patients was 13 months, with three-year survival rates of 21 percent.

Married women had the best three-year survival rate of 46 percent, and single men had the worst three-year survival rate of 3 percent. Married patients had improved survival compared to single patients—33 percent vs. 10 percent. Single females and married men had intermediate overall survival of 25 percent. Race also appears to play a role—married white patients had the best survival of 40 percent, and married black patients had a 26 percent three-year survival rate.

This study's results reinforce the critical role of spouses and caregivers in patient survival, and they are consistent with similar studies of other site-specific cancers, including head and neck and [prostate cancer](#). The authors hypothesize that caregivers provide not only daily care but logistical support to help manage the treatment plan, compliance with the treatment plan and more accurate reporting of patient symptoms.

"While we were not surprised by these results, they confirm the positive impact of spousal support on patient survival," said lead author Elizabeth Nichols, MD, a resident in the department of [radiation oncology](#) at the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore. "These findings also demonstrate the need for improved support of cancer patients and their spouses in order to continue to improve [survival rates](#)."

**More information:** The abstract, "Marital Status is an Independent Predictor of Survival for Patients Undergoing Definitive Chemoradiation for Stage III Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer," will be presented during the Poster Viewing at 5:00 p.m., Central time on September 6, 2012.

Provided by American Society for Radiation Oncology

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