

Survival from rare bone cancer remains low

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Among the deadliest cancers is a rare malignancy called mesenchymal chondrosarcoma, which begins in cartilage around bones and typically strikes young adults.

Ten-year [survival](#) has been reported to be as low as 20 percent. But a Loyola University Medical Center study has found survival is not as dismal as prior reports. Among 205 cases examined, more than half (51 percent) of patients survived at least five years, and 43 percent survived at least 10 years, the study found.

The study by senior author Lukas Nystrom, MD, and colleagues was reported at the Mid-America Orthopaedic Association annual meeting in Hilton Head, S.C. Dr. Nystrom is a Loyola University Medical Center orthopaedic surgeon who specializes in orthopaedic oncology, a specialty involving the treatment of benign and [malignant tumors](#) of the bone and soft tissues.

Chondrosarcoma is uncontrolled growth of cancerous cells that produce cartilage. It begins in or around bones, or occasionally in [soft tissues](#). A subtype, mesenchymal chondrosarcoma, is a higher grade, and often aggressive. Treatment typically includes surgery to remove the [tumor](#), and sometimes chemotherapy.

Dr. Nystrom and colleagues examined data from the Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) program database administered through the National Cancer Institute. They analyzed 205 cases of mesenchymal chondrosarcoma occurring between 1973 and 2011.

Survival rates varied, depending on where tumors were located. Patients with axial tumors (i.e., in the spine, pelvis and trunk) were found to have worse survival outcomes when compared to patients with tumors in arms or legs. Dr. Nystrom said the likely reason is because in some [patients](#), the tumors are located in areas that are essentially inoperable and thus cannot be safely removed. Dr. Nystrom further speculated that the reason overall survival was found to be higher than in previous reports may be due to improved CT and MRI imaging and the introduction of chemotherapy as part of the treatment regimen.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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