

New guidelines address long-term needs of colorectal cancer survivors

September 8 2015



Cancer—Histopathologic image of colonic carcinoid. Credit: Wikipedia/CC BY-SA 3.0

New American Cancer Society Cancer Survivorship Care guidelines released today provide primary care clinicians with recommendations for providing comprehensive care to the estimated 1.2 million survivors of colorectal cancer in the United States.

The guidelines are the second to be published in a series of cancer survivorship care guidelines developed by the American Cancer Society. They provide guidance on identifying and managing potential physical and psychosocial long-term and late effects of [colorectal cancer](#) and its treatment, as well as other key elements of adult post-treatment survivorship care.

Thanks in large part to increased screening leading to removal of polyps before they turn cancerous, the incidence of colorectal cancer has been dropping for two decades. Nonetheless, colorectal cancer survivors make up more than 1.2 million (about 9 percent) of the nearly 15 million cancer survivors alive in the U.S., making colorectal cancer the second most common cancer site among male cancer survivors, and third most common among female survivors.

To develop the guidelines, a multi-disciplinary team led by Khaled El-Shami, MD, PhD, of The GW Medical Faculty Associates, a Hematologist/Oncologist with board certification in Medical Oncology and Internal Medicine, reviewed relevant literature as well as publically available [clinical practice guidelines](#) from the U.S. and around the world. The process is aligned with the Society's process for creating cancer screening guidelines, and both ensure alignment with new standards recommended by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) for how guidelines should be developed. As with the Society's cancer screening guidelines, the survivorship care guidelines will be updated every five years as new research is available.

The new guidelines include recommendations for the essential components of comprehensive cancer survivorship care, from screening for recurrence and early detection of second primary cancers, to assessment and management of physical and psychosocial long-term and late effects of colorectal cancer and its treatment.

"Considering the potential significant impacts of cancer and its treatment on colorectal cancer survivor health and quality of life, it is imperative that clinicians have credible guidance to help ensure that cancer survivors receive high-quality, comprehensive, coordinated clinical follow-up care," said Catherine Alfano, PhD, principal investigator and project director for the National Cancer Survivorship Resource Center, and vice president, Survivorship, in the Office of Cancer Control at the American Cancer Society. "While there are still important gaps in research, enough evidence exists to provide these consensus-based [guidelines](#) to improve post-treatment care, which we expect to help [cancer survivors](#) mitigate the known impacts of colorectal [cancer](#) and its treatment."

Provided by American Cancer Society

Citation: New guidelines address long-term needs of colorectal cancer survivors (2015, September 8) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-09-guidelines-long-term-colorectal-cancer-survivors.html>

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