

# Malignant brain tumors most common cause of cancer deaths in adolescents and young adults

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A new report published in the journal *Neuro-Oncology* and funded by the American Brain Tumor Association (ABTA) finds that malignant brain tumors are the most common cause of cancer-related deaths in adolescents and young adults aged 15-39 and the most common cancer occurring among 15-19 year olds.

The 50-page report, which utilized data from the Central Brain Tumor Registry of the United States (CBTRUS) from 2008-2012, is the first in-depth statistical analysis of brain and central nervous system (CNS) tumors in adolescents and young adults (AYA). Statistics are provided on [tumor](#) type, tumor location and age group (15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34 and 35-39) for both malignant and non-malignant brain and CNS tumors.

"When analyzing data in 5-year age increments, researchers discovered that the adolescent and young adult population is not one group but rather several distinct groups that are impacted by very different tumor types as they move into adulthood," said Elizabeth Wilson, president and CEO of the American Brain Tumor Association.

"For these individuals—who are finishing school, pursuing their careers and starting and raising young families—a brain tumor diagnosis is especially cruel and disruptive," added Wilson. "This report enables us for the first time to zero-in on the types of tumors occurring at key

intervals over a 25-year time span to help guide critical research investments and strategies for living with a brain tumor that reflect the patient's unique needs."

Although brain and CNS tumors are the most common type of cancer among people aged 15-19, the report shows how other cancers become more common with age. By ages 34-39 years, brain and CNS tumors are the third most common cancer after breast and thyroid cancer.

"What's interesting is the wide variability in the types of [brain tumors](#) diagnosed within this age group which paints a much different picture than what we see in adults or in pediatric patients," explained the study's senior author Jill Barnholtz-Sloan, Ph.D., associate professor, Case Comprehensive Cancer Center, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and Scientific Principal Investigator for CBTRUS.

"For example, the most common tumor types observed in adults are meningiomas and glioblastomas, but there is much more diversity in the common tumor types observed in the adolescent and young adult population. You also clearly see a transition from predominantly non-malignant and low-grade tumors to predominantly high-grade tumors with increasing age," Barnholtz-Sloan said.

There are nearly 700,000 people in the U.S. living with brain and CNS tumors and approximately 15 percent of these tumors occurred in the AYA population during the 2008-2012 time frame analyzed in this report. Approximately 10,617 brain and CNS tumors are diagnosed among adolescents and [young adults](#) each year and are the cause of approximately 434 deaths annually.

"The American Brain Tumor Association's recognition of this understudied population, and their commitment to data and information sharing should be applauded," added Barnholtz-Sloan. "There are clearly

unique characteristics of the 15-39 age group that we need to more comprehensively understand and the information in the ABTA report starts that important dialogue."

**More information:** The full report is available at [www.abta.org/about-us/news/brain-tumor-statistics/](http://www.abta.org/about-us/news/brain-tumor-statistics/)

Provided by American Brain Tumor Association

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