

# Effect of treatment trials on survival of patients with cancer in US population

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Joseph M. Unger, Ph.D., M.S., of the SWOG Statistical Center and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle, Wash., and coauthors examined how the National Cancer Institute-sponsored network of cooperative cancer research groups has benefited patients with cancer in the general population.

More than 50 years ago, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) established a network of publicly funded cancer cooperative research groups to evaluate new treatments for safety and efficacy. This study used data from SWOG, one of the original cooperative research groups launched in 1956 as a pediatric oncology group under a different name. The NCI later directed the group to extend its mandate to adult cancer and it was renamed to a moniker that was then shortened to SWOG. SWOG conducts cancer [treatment trials](#) and has about 12,000 members from cancer clinics and centers at more than 650 institutions around the country.

The authors examined the extent to which positive NCI-sponsored cancer treatment trials have benefitted patients with cancer in the United States by using data from 23 positive SWOG treatment trials from 1965 to 2012.

Study authors estimate more than 3.34 million life-years were gained from the 23 trials through 2015. They also estimate the U.S. dollar return on investment was \$125 per life-year gained.

Study limitations include the model used to calculate life-years, which simplified representation of the complex manner in which new trial-proven treatments translate to patients with cancer.

"The NCI's investment in its cancer cooperative research program has provided exceptional value and benefit to the American public through its research programs generating positive [cancer](#) treatment trials," the article concludes.

**More information:** *JAMA Oncology*,  
[jamanetwork.com/journals/jamao ... /jamaoncol.2017.0762](http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamao.../jamaoncol.2017.0762)

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