

2007 to 2017 saw decline in number of U.S. pathologists

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(HealthDay)—The U.S. pathologist workforce decreased in both

absolute and population-adjusted numbers from 2007 to 2017, according to a study published online May 31 in *JAMA Network Open*.

David M. Metter, M.D., from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, and colleagues used data from the American Association of Medical Colleges Center for Workforce Studies' Physician Specialty Data Books and the Canadian Medical Association Masterfile to examine the trends in the U.S. pathology workforce from 2007 to 2017.

The researchers found that from 2007 to 2017, the number of active pathologists in the United States decreased from 15,568 to 12,839 (−17.53 percent), while there was an increase in Canadian pathologists from 1,467 to 1,767 (+20.45 percent) during the same period. Similarly, the number of pathologists per 100,000 population declined from 5.16 to 3.94 in the United States versus an increase from 4.46 to 4.81 in Canada. Pathologists decreased as a percentage of total U.S. physicians from 2.03 percent in 2007 to 1.43 percent in 2017. Wide geographic variation was also noted in the distribution of U.S. pathologists, with the fewest in Idaho (1.37 per 100,000 population) and the most in Washington, D.C. (15.71 per 100,000 population). The diagnostic workload per year per U.S. pathologist rose by 41.73 percent during the study period compared with a 7.06 percent increase in diagnostic workload for Canadian pathologists when adjusted by new cancer cases per year.

"The U.S. pathologist workforce is now, per capita, smaller than the Canadian pathologist workforce," the authors write. "Given the potential negative health care consequences of a pathologist shortage, efforts to understand the etiology of the shrinking U.S. pathologist [workforce](#) should be initiated by [policy makers](#), health care delivery systems, insurers, and physicians."

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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