

# Study examines how the COVID-19 pandemic impacts quality of life in patients with cancer

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Patients with cancer face a serious dilemma during the COVID-19 pandemic, as staying at home could increase their risk of cancer progression, while visiting the hospital for treatment could increase their risk of becoming infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. A new

study published in *Psycho-Oncology* reveals how the pandemic has impacted such patients' quality of life.

The surveyed-based study, which included 260 [patients](#) with stage III and IV cancer undergoing chemotherapy when the pandemic hit, found that patients' [quality of life](#) during the pandemic was significantly lower than that of a reference group of 8,066 patients with stages III and IV cancer before the pandemic.

The differences in perceived quality of life concerned mainly social and cognitive functioning, which were significantly lower in patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. Physical and emotional functioning were similar between the two groups.

The study revealed that 20% of patients with cancer considered postponing chemotherapy and 5% consider abandoning further cancer treatment during the pandemic, despite a fear of cancer progression.

"During this extraordinary time, [cancer patients](#) are facing a war on two fronts having to struggle with the increased risk of COVID-19 morbidity and the risk of cancer progression with possible delays of diagnosis or treatment," said lead author Magdalena Ciążyńska, Ph.D., of the Nicolaus Copernicus Multidisciplinary Centre for Oncology and Traumatology, in Poland. "Living with cancer at the time of pandemic does not mean that oncological care must be compromised. The oncology community, despite having to deal with unprecedented challenges in treating patients, at the same time identifies [risk factors](#) that deteriorate patients' quality of life to ensure that their safety and wellbeing are not affected."

**More information:** Magdalena Ciążyńska et al. Quality of life of cancer patients during coronavirus disease ( COVID -19) pandemic, *Psycho-Oncology* (2020). [DOI: 10.1002/pon.5434](https://doi.org/10.1002/pon.5434)

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