

Survival up for colon cancer patients in U.S. military health system

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(HealthDay)—Patients with colon cancer who are in the U.S. military

health system, with universal health care, have better survival than those in the general U.S. population, according to a study published online June 23 in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*.

Jie Lin, Ph.D., M.P.H., from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, and colleagues used data from the Department of Defense Automated Central Tumor Registry (ACTUR) and the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) program to estimate all-cause mortality among patients with [colon cancer](#) in the military health system (11,907 individuals) versus the [general population](#) (23,814 individuals).

The researchers found that overall, ACTUR patients had better survival versus SEER patients (hazard ratio, 0.82). Findings were similar for subgroups according to age, gender, and Black and White race. Even when adjusting for tumor stage, better survival persisted.

"The Military Health System provides medical care with minimal or usually no financial barriers. Thus, our findings provide solid evidence of the benefits of access to universal health care, which can be helpful evidence for policymakers looking to improve the outcomes of colon cancer patients by looking at novel ways to implement change at multiple levels," a coauthor said in a statement. "What's more, when [medical care](#) is universally provided to all patients, racial disparity in colon cancer outcomes can be reduced."

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