Barrett esophagus, esophageal cancer diagnoses down during pandemic

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(HealthDay)—New diagnoses of Barrett esophagus (BE) and esophageal

cancer decreased during COVID-19, along with endoscopic ablation therapy, according to a report published online Nov. 18 in *Gastroenterology*.

Arvind J. Trindade, M.D., from the Long Island Jewish Medical Center in New Hyde Park, New York, and colleagues evaluated claims data from the Premier Healthcare Database to assess changes in the monthly number of newly diagnosed BE cases, number of endoscopic ablation cases performed, number of newly diagnosed esophageal cancer cases, and number of esophagectomies performed during the pandemic versus baseline.

The researchers found that patient monthly volume decreased significantly during the pandemic for newly diagnosed BE, BE endoscopic ablation, and newly diagnosed esophageal cancer, but not for esophagectomy. The number of newly diagnosed BE cases was 16.5 percent of the baseline in April 2020 and 129.9 percent of baseline in April 2021, while the number of BE endoscopic ablation cases was 16.4 and 60.7 percent of baseline at the two timepoints, respectively. Finally, the number of newly diagnosed esophageal cancer patients was 61.8 percent of baseline in April 2020 and 123.6 percent of baseline in April 2021.

"The results indicate that early esophageal cancer is likely being undiagnosed or untreated during COVID-19," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed financial ties to the medical device industry.

More information: Abstract/Full Text

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