

COVID-19 led to dangerous delays in care for women with gynecologic cancers

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A COVID-19 diagnosis can lead to potentially life-threatening treatment

delays for women with gynecological cancers, a new study finds. That's especially true for non-white patients, the researchers said.

"We found that concurrent COVID-19 had significant negative effects on these cancer [patients](#), especially among those who identified as Black or Asian," said study leader Dr. Gretchen Glaser, of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn.

The study included 348 patients at seven U.S. institutions. The patients had low- and high-grade endometrial, high-grade ovarian, cervical, vulvar and other [gynecological cancers](#) when diagnosed with COVID-19.

At the time of their [COVID-19](#) diagnosis, 37% of the patients had active cancer and one-quarter were receiving [cancer treatment](#). Seven out of 10 patients were white, while 18% were Black and 2% were Asian.

Of the 101 patients hospitalized for the coronavirus, 18 were admitted to the [intensive care unit](#) (ICU) and eight died of COVID-19 complications. Overall, 5% of the patients died within 30 days after their COVID-19 diagnosis.

Delays or discontinuation of cancer treatment due to COVID-19 occurred for 28% of the patients, with [chemotherapy](#) and surgery being the most frequently delayed treatments, the study authors noted.

Among these patients, older age, having two or more other [health conditions](#), and being non-white were associated with a higher risk of hospitalization, including ICU admission. Patients who died were also more likely to be older or have active cancer.

The study findings were presented Saturday at the Society of Gynecologic Oncology's [annual meeting](#), in Phoenix, Ariz. Data and conclusions presented at meetings should be considered preliminary until

published in a peer-reviewed medical journal.

"While it is well-known that the pandemic has impacted the delivery of care in patients who have conditions other than COVID-19, including cancer, our study is the first to examine how a diagnosis of COVID-19 affects care and outcomes for [gynecologic cancer](#) patients," Glaser said in a society news release.

"Additional studies are needed to examine the long-term outcomes and mortality in gynecologic [cancer patients](#) who also have COVID-19, with particular attention given to identifying the reasons for the disproportionate effect that concurrence has on patients of non-white race," Glaser concluded.

More information: The Society of Gynecologic Oncology offers advice on [patient resources](#).

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