

Telemedicine success tied to patient outcomes in thoracic cancer

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Telemedicine access is lower among disadvantaged thoracic cancer

patients, according to a study published online July 7 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Najeff Waseem, M.D., from Johns Hopkins Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center, in Baltimore, and colleagues examined factors associated with successfully accessing and completing telemedicine visits and the association between telemedicine visit success and clinical outcomes among patients with thoracic cancer. The analysis included 720 patients with 1,940 visits from March 1 to July 17, 2020.

The researchers found that 56.86 percent of telemedicine visits were successful. Successful telemedicine visits were less likely among patients who were Black (odds ratio [OR], 0.62), had Medicaid (OR, 0.38), or were from a ZIP code with an elevated risk for cancer mortality (OR, 0.51). A higher likelihood of an emergency department (OR, 2.73) or urgent care (OR, 4.50) visit or hospitalization (OR, 2.37) was seen among patients with at least one unsuccessful telemedicine visit. Compared with patients seen in person only, patients with all successful telemedicine [visits](#) (OR, 0.52) or only one unsuccessful visit (OR, 0.32) had lower odds of death. There was an association noted between starting a new therapy and lower odds of having a telemedicine visit versus an in-person visit (OR, 0.49), along with higher odds of a successful telemedicine visit (OR, 1.90).

"The findings suggest that there are disparities in telemedicine access among [patients](#) at risk of adverse health outcomes and that unsuccessful [telemedicine visits](#) are associated with poor long-term health outcomes," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to the [pharmaceutical industry](#).

More information: Najeff Waseem et al, Disparities in Telemedicine Success and Their Association With Adverse Outcomes in Patients With

Thoracic Cancer During the COVID-19 Pandemic, *JAMA Network Open* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.20543](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.20543)

Howard West, Current and Future Questions for Telemedicine Research in Oncology—Moving Beyond Feasibility, *JAMA Network Open* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.20550](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.20550)

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