

Older US adults with certain preexisting conditions often diagnosed with poor prognosis cancers

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A recent analysis published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* found that before older U.S. adults were diagnosed with poor

prognosis cancers, many had preexisting conditions such as functional impairment, difficulty with mobility, falls, and poor memory.

Of 2,105 participants aged 65 years and older, approximately 65% had difficulty climbing stairs, 49% had no advance directive, 35% lived alone, 36% fell in the last 2 years, and 32% rated their memory as poor. Functional impairment and falls were highest among adults aged 85 years and older. Adults aged 65–74 years were less likely to have an advance directive. Also, women had a higher rate of pain and [physical impairment](#).

"Older adults with poor prognosis cancers have an [average life expectancy](#) of less than one year. They represent an especially vulnerable group of patients," said corresponding author Mazie Tsang, MD, MAS, MS of Mayo Clinic Arizona. "Based on our findings, all older adults with poor prognosis cancers should be assessed for preexisting conditions that are routinely managed by primary care practitioners, geriatricians, and palliative care practitioners. Our findings are foundational to improving the holistic care of [older adults](#) with poor prognosis cancers."

More information: Mazie Tsang et al, The epidemiology of preexisting geriatric and palliative conditions in older adults with poor prognosis cancers, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2022). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.18039](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.18039)

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