

1999 to 2018 saw increase in cancer survivors with functional limitation, finds research

May 12 2023, by Elana Gotkine



From 1999 to 2018, there was a more than twofold increase in the

number of cancer survivors reporting functional limitations, according to a research letter published online May 11 in *JAMA Oncology*.

Vishal R. Patel, from the University of Texas at Austin, and colleagues examined 20-year trends in prevalence of self-reported [functional limitations](#) among U.S. [cancer survivors](#) using data from the 1999 to 2018 National Health Interview Survey. A total of 51,258 cancer survivors were identified representing a weighted population of about 178.8 million.

The researchers found that in 1999, 3.6 million weighted survivors reported functional limitation; this increased 2.25-fold to 8.2 million in 2018. From 1999 to 2018, the number of limitation-free survivors increased 1.34-fold. During the same period, the number of cancer-free individuals with functional limitation increased 1.6-fold. From 1999 to 2018, the adjusted prevalence of functional limitation among survivors increased from 57.0 to 70.1 percent; the greatest change was seen for Hispanic and Black survivors (25.1 and 19.4 percent, respectively) and for those aged 55 to 64 years (17.2 percent). The adjusted prevalence of functional limitation was highest among survivors of pancreatic and lung cancers (80.3 and 76.5 percent, respectively) and lowest among survivors of melanoma, breast, and [prostate cancers](#) (62.2, 61.8, and 59.5 percent, respectively).

"Our findings suggest an urgent need for care teams to understand and address function, for researchers to evaluate function as a core outcome in trials, and for [health systems](#) and [policy makers](#) to reimagine survivorship care, recognizing the burden of cancer and its treatment on physical, psychosocial, and cognitive function," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

More information: Vishal R. Patel et al, Trends in the Prevalence of

Functional Limitations Among US Cancer Survivors, 1999-2018, *JAMA Oncology* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamaoncol.2023.1180](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaoncol.2023.1180)

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