

# UK cancer patients experienced 84% cut in COVID deaths following vaccine rollout, shows research

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Cancer patients saw a significant fall in COVID-related hospitalizations and mortality following the rollout of vaccines, shows the first

panoramic study of its kind.

The research, published in *Scientific Reports*, looked at the impact of the global pandemic on case-outcome rates for cancer patients across a 21-month period from November 2020 to August 2022. The team of researchers, led by the University of Birmingham, found that hospitalizations in the period fell from nearly one in three patients (30.58%) to one in 13 patients (7.45%); and, case-[mortality](#) rates fell from more than one in five patients (20.53%) to less than one in 30 patients (3.25%).

Among cancer patients, the study also found that age was a greater predictor of mortality rates than the type of cancer that a patient had. In 2022, case-mortality rate for patients over 80 was more than one in ten (10.32%) compared to less than one in 35 (2.83%) for under 80s.

Compared to the [general population](#), COVID-19 infections leave cancer patients more than twice as likely to be hospitalized (2.1 times as likely) or to die (2.54 times as likely) at the end of the study period.

Dr. Lennard Lee, from the Institute of Cancer and Genomic Sciences at the University of Birmingham and lead author of the study, said, "People living with cancer are worried that they have been forgotten. Our work shows that the UK is emerging out of the tunnel of the global pandemic, and we know who are still at the greatest risk of the consequences of COVID-19 infection so that they're not left behind. This data is undoubtedly good news for [cancer patients](#), but despite significant falls in hospitalizations and mortality over the years we studied we can still see the additional risk."

Thomas Starkey, Ph.D., a researcher from the University of Birmingham and first author of the study, said, "By collating and analyzing electronic health care data for evaluating the real-world impact of the global

pandemic in the UK, we can now use population-scale data to protect people living with cancer from [infectious diseases](#) such as COVID-19."

The study drew from data from the UKCCP, one of the United Kingdom's longest running pandemic responses with a mission to safeguard, evaluate and protect patients with cancer, ([www.ukcovidcancerprogramme.org](http://www.ukcovidcancerprogramme.org)).

This project was a population-based study of COVID-19 outcomes in patients with [cancer](#) from the study period of 1 November 2020 to 31 August 2022, initiated to define the disease phenotype in the highest clinical risk groups.

**More information:** A population-scale temporal case-control evaluation of COVID-19 disease phenotype and related outcome rates in patients with cancer in England (UKCCP), *Scientific Reports* (2023). [DOI: 10.1038/S41598-023-36990-9](https://doi.org/10.1038/S41598-023-36990-9)

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