

# Age-adjusted cancer mortality rates decreased from 2000 to 2020

January 18 2024, by Elana Gotkine

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From 2000 to 2020, U.S. age-adjusted cancer mortality rates decreased significantly, but racial and ethnic disparities persisted for certain cancers, according to a research letter published online Jan. 12 in *JAMA*

*Health Forum.*

Anjali Gupta and Tomi Akinyemiju, Ph.D., from the Duke University School of Medicine in Durham, North Carolina, used publicly available data from the National Center for Health Statistics to estimate age-adjusted cancer mortality rates for Black and White individuals for each year between January 2000 and December 2020.

The researchers found that age-adjusted mortality rates were 251.7 and 199.7 per 100,000 population among Black and White individuals, respectively, in 2000, significantly decreasing to 166.8 and 149.3 per 100,000 population in 2020 (average annual percentage changes,  $-2.04$  and  $-1.44$  percent, respectively). For both groups, declines in cancer mortality were seen for each cancer type between 2000 and 2020.

For all cancers except female lung and bronchus, Black individuals consistently experienced higher mortality than White individuals. There was a decrease in the overall [cancer mortality](#) rate ratio between Black and White individuals from 1.26 to 1.12, with a corresponding decline in absolute rate differences (51.99 to 17.54 per 100,000).

For female breast cancer and male colorectal cancer, the rate ratio increased (1.31 to 1.37 and 1.44 to 1.45, respectively). Across the study period, considerable disparities remained for prostate, male lung and bronchus, and female colorectal cancer.

"Our results underscore the importance of sustained, focused efforts to reduce cancer burden among Black patients across the continuum of cancer care," the authors write.

**More information:** Anjali Gupta et al, Trends in Cancer Mortality Disparities Between Black and White Individuals in the US, 2000-2020, *JAMA Health Forum* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamahealthforum.2023.4617](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamahealthforum.2023.4617)

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Citation: Age-adjusted cancer mortality rates decreased from 2000 to 2020 (2024, January 18)  
retrieved 28 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-01-age-adjusted-cancer-mortality-decreased.html>

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