

Cervical cancer rates are rising in low-income US counties, study shows

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Women in low-income areas of the U.S. face a stark rise in cervical cancer incidence and mortality, according to a new study led by researchers from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

The results, published in the *International Journal of Cancer*, demonstrate that the incidence rate for distant-stage cervical cancer has increased most among [white women](#) living in low-income counties, at 4.4% annually since 2007. The largest increase in cervical cancer mortality rates occurred in Black women in low-income counties, at 2.9% annually since 2013, despite cancer incidence in this group declining.

"The findings are quite concerning," said lead author Trisha Amboree, Ph.D., postdoctoral fellow in Behavioral Science. "Despite decades of improvement due to the widespread implementation of cervical cancer prevention programs in the U.S., our study shows women may be facing disruptions along the screening and treatment continuum that are leading to more distant-stage cancers and, potentially, more deaths."

In 2019, across all racial and [ethnic groups](#), cervical cancer incidence was greater among women living in low-income counties in the U.S. with the highest absolute incidence observed among Hispanic women.

"These data add to a growing body of evidence indicating widening disparities driven by [socioeconomic status](#)," said co-senior author Jane Montealegre, Ph.D., associate professor of Behavioral Science. "Cervical cancer is almost entirely preventable through vaccination against [human papillomavirus](#) (HPV), screening and early detection. This continued upward trend calls for scaled-up efforts to eliminate disparities in cervical cancer prevention."

Researchers used Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results-22 (SEER-22) data between 2000–2019 to examine occurrences of [cervical cancer](#) diagnoses and deaths. They also analyzed race, ethnicity and county-level median household income with the low-income counties ranging from \$19,330 to \$38,820.

The study was conducted in collaboration with Ashish Deshmukh, Ph.D., co-leader of the Cancer Control research program at The Medical University of South Carolina Hollings Cancer Center.

More information: Zilong Bian et al, Healthy lifestyle and cancer survival: A multinational cohort study, *International Journal of Cancer* (2024). [DOI: 10.1002/ijc.34846](https://doi.org/10.1002/ijc.34846)

Provided by University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center

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