

Substance use disorders on the rise for survivors of specific cancers

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The prevalence of substance use disorder (SUD) seems to be elevated among survivors of certain types of cancer, according to a study published online Jan. 11 in *JAMA Oncology*.

Katie F. Jones, Ph.D., from VA Boston Healthcare System, and colleagues describe cancer type-specific prevalence of SUD among adult cancer survivors in a cross-sectional study using data from the annually administered National Survey on Drug Use and Health for 2015 through 2020. The analyses included 6,101 adult cancer survivors.

The researchers found that the prevalence of active SUD was 3.83 percent among lifetime cancer survivors. The prevalence of SUD was highest in survivors of head and neck cancer (including mouth, tongue, lip, throat, and pharyngeal cancers), esophageal and [gastric cancer](#), [cervical cancer](#), and melanoma (9.36, 9.42, 6.24, and 6.20 percent, respectively).

The most common SUD was [alcohol use disorder](#) overall (2.78 percent) and in survivors of head and [neck cancer](#), cervical cancer, and melanoma. Cannabis use disorder was the most prevalent SUD in survivors of esophageal and gastric cancers (9.42 percent).

The overall prevalence of active SUD was similar among respondents diagnosed with cancer in the past 12 months to that in the lifetime cancer survivor cohort (3.81 percent). Active SUD was higher in head and neck and cervical cancer survivors (18.73 and 15.70 percent, respectively).

"Findings of this study highlight subpopulations of adult cancer survivors who may benefit from efforts to integrate cancer and addiction care," the authors write.

More information: Katie F. Jones et al, Substance Use Disorders Among US Adult Cancer Survivors, *JAMA Oncology* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamaoncol.2023.5785](#)

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