

# One in five US cancer patients join in medical research

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More patients these days are taking part in cancer research, a new study finds.

At least one in five people with cancer (22%) participate in some form

of clinical research, when all types of cancer studies are considered, researchers found.

Moreover, enrollment in cancer [treatment](#) trials was 7%, more than double previous participation estimates of 2% to 3% of [patients](#).

"Cancer clinical research, in all of its forms, simply cannot be conducted without the contributions of people with cancer," said lead researcher Joseph Unger, a health services researcher and biostatistician at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in Seattle.

"These contributions are much more extensive than was previously recognized," Unger said in a cancer center news release.

For the study, published April 2 in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, researchers cast a wide net to capture all participation in not only clinical trials, but also patients who contribute [tissue samples](#) for research or take part in quality-of-life studies.

The expanded analysis included more than 70% of people diagnosed with cancer each year in the United States. These folks received care in a variety of settings, from community hospitals to comprehensive cancer centers.

Participation rates for various studies included:

- 13% providing samples for bio-repositories.
- 7% participating in treatment trials.
- 7% signing up for cancer registries.
- 4% participating in [genetic studies](#).
- 3% participating in quality-of-life studies.
- 3% enrolling in diagnostic studies.
- 2% taking part in economic studies.

Participation in treatment trials was more than five-fold higher at National Cancer Institute-designated cancer centers than at [community hospitals](#), 22% versus 4%, researchers found.

This reflects the impact that [federal funding](#) can have on a hospital's ability to offer [clinical trials](#) and recruit patients, researchers said. Most U.S. cancer patients receive treatment at a community hospital.

"We know that most patients with cancer will participate in a clinical trial if given the chance, and the level of enrollment we see at NCI-designated cancer centers shows what participation can be when patients are offered trials," said senior researcher [Mark Fleury](#), a policy principle at the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network.

"These findings emphasize the need to offer more patients in community settings the chance to participate and that will require an investment in these sites that currently isn't there," Fleury added.

**More information:** Joseph M. Unger et al, National Estimates of the Participation of Patients With Cancer in Clinical Research Studies Based on Commission on Cancer Accreditation Data, *Journal of Clinical Oncology* (2024). [DOI: 10.1200/JCO.23.01030](https://doi.org/10.1200/JCO.23.01030)

The National Cancer Institute has more about [participating in cancer research](#).

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