

Kids from poorer families less likely to survive cancer, study shows

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Children from poor families are less likely to survive [cancer](#), particularly if they are not white, a new study reports.

The study was published in the [Journal of the American College of Surgeons](#).

A childhood cancer patient's risk of dying within five years of their diagnosis increases 4% for every one-point increase in their neighborhood's Area Deprivation Index (ADI), researchers found.

The ADI uses 17 factors to measure a patient's background, with higher scores indicating greater economic uncertainty, researchers said.

Results also showed that non-white children had an increased risk of death from cancer.

"Despite significant progress in the treatment of pediatric cancer, [socioeconomic factors](#) continue to cause outcome disparities," said researcher Dr. Dai Chung, a professor of surgery at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

For the study, researchers analyzed Texas Cancer Registry records of nearly 3,900 children diagnosed with tumors between 1995 and 2019. The average age at diagnosis was 4 and a half years old.

Poor and minority kids also had an increased risk of their cancer spreading to other parts of their bodies, as well as children living in [rural areas](#) or areas near the Texas-Mexico border.

That could be because those groups are more likely to have a delay in their [cancer treatment](#), researchers said.

For example, among all sarcoma patients the median time between diagnosis and start of treatment was three days.

But treatment began more than 51 days later for Black children

compared to white kids, and 34 days later for rural kids compared to city children, the study found.

"Our hope is that our study findings can motivate improvements in racial and socioeconomic diversity in pediatric cancer [clinical trials](#), increase funding for disparities in outcomes research, and implement ground-level changes that will make health care more accessible for all patients," Chung said.

More information: The National Cancer Institute has more on [childhood cancers](#).

Elizabeth D Cochran et al, Social Determinants of Outcomes Disparity among Pediatric Patients with Solid Tumor, *Journal of the American College of Surgeons* (2024). [DOI: 10.1097/XCS.0000000000001010](https://doi.org/10.1097/XCS.0000000000001010)

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