

Female radiation oncologists submit fewer charges to Medicare, collect less revenue, study finds

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The UCLA research illustrates a gender gap in Medicare charges and collections for radiation oncologists. Credit: UCLA

A new study by UCLA researchers has found that female radiation oncologists submit fewer charges to Medicare, are reimbursed less per charge submitted and receive lower Medicare payments overall in comparison to male radiation oncologists.

The team of UCLA investigators was led by Dr. Ann Raldow, a member of the UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center. The researchers reviewed the 2016 Medicare & Medicaid Services Physician and Other Supplier Public Use File, which provides data on services provided to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, and they identified charge and payment information for individual radiation oncologists practicing in outpatient and hospital settings.

The data revealed that of the 4,393 radiation oncologists submitting claims to Medicare, female physicians who worked in an outpatient setting on

average submitted 1,051 fewer charges and collected \$143,610 less in revenue than male physicians. Female radiation oncologists who worked in a hospital or similar care facility submitted on average 423 fewer charges and collected \$26,735 less in revenue than their male counterparts.

Even among a group of highly productive radiation oncologists (those submitting the greatest number of Medicare claims), female radiation oncologists in the hospital setting collected on average \$33,026 less than their male counterparts. In the outpatient settings, this gap was even wider, with similarly highly productive females collecting an average of \$345,944 less than males.

"Our study illustrates a gender gap in Medicare charges and collections for [radiation](#) oncologists, the latter of which is likely attributable to female physicians consistently submitting fewer charges and also charging for services that are less well reimbursed," said Dr. Luca Valle, a resident at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, who is the study's first author. "The source of this variation is unknown, but warrants further review."

The study is published in *JAMA Network Open*. The authors did not receive [financial support](#) for the study.

More information: Luca Valle et al. Assessment of Differences in Clinical Activity and Medicare Payments Among Female and Male Radiation Oncologists, *JAMA Network Open* (2019). DOI: [10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.0932](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.0932)

Provided by University of California, Los Angeles

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