Colorectal Cancer Risk Is Higher Among Black and Latino Young Adults

Black and Latino people ages 20 to 39 saw a higher risk of distant-stage colorectal cancers, finds a new study.

January 26, 2022 By Trent Straube

In recent decades, a growing number of people younger than 50 have been diagnosed with colorectal cancers. In an effort to improve screening and treatment among this demographic, a group of researchers examined available data on this concerning trend. As the American Association for Cancer Research reports, the resulting study found that between 2000 and 2016 people between ages 20 and 39 saw the biggest increase in distant-stage early-onset colorectal adenocarcinoma. What's more, young African-American and Latino people saw the highest proportions of the distant-stage cancer.

Study results were published in Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research.

Early-onset colorectal cancers refer to those diagnosed in people younger than 50; distant-stage refers to colorectal cancer that has spread beyond the colon or rectum—for example, to distant organs, such as the lungs or liver. Such cancers have the highest rates of disease morbidity and mortality. (You can learn more about colorectal cancer stages on this American Cancer Society page.)

In light of their findings, researchers support the federal guidance to begin screening for colorectal cancer at age 45 instead of 50 and suggest that more focus is placed on racial subgroups seeing higher incidence of these colorectal cancers.

Previous studies have not thoroughly explored the stages of colorectal cancer among young people or differentiated between the severity of the tumors, noted study author Jordan Karlitz, MD, chief of the Gastrointestinal Division at Denver Health Medical Center and an associate professor at the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

To gain more insight on colorectal cancer among young adults, Karlitz and his colleagues examined data between 2000 and 2016 on 103,975 patients with colorectal adenocarcinoma, a more aggressive tumor than the more common rectal carcinoid tumors. Previous studies often lumped the two types of tumors together, making the cancers seem less severe and muddying the

understanding of who is at higher risk.

The researchers broke the data down by age, race, cancer stage and other categories. They found that younger age groups saw a greater increase in the rates of distant-stage colorectal adenocarcinomas. Specifically, those between 30 and 39 years old experienced a 49% spike in colon-only distant-stage adenocarcinoma. When it came to rectal-only distant-stage adenocarcinoma, 20- to 29-year-olds saw the steepest increase: 133%.

“Although the increasing burden of early-onset colorectal cancer affects all races,” Karlitz said in the press release, “these increases seem to be particularly prominent in the youngest non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic subgroups, although absolute case counts remain relatively low.”

In related news, see “Interview: How to Save a Life From Colorectal Cancer,” “‘Black Panther’ Actor Chadwick Boseman Dies of Colon Cancer at 43,” “Former Rockette Jennifer Jones Wishes She Had a Colonoscopy at Age 45 [VIDEO]” and “When Should I Start Getting Colon Cancer Screenings?”

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/colorectal-cancer-risk-higher-among-black-latino-young-adults