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# Pre-Diagnosis Adverse Financial Events Increase Cancer Mortality Risk

Bankruptcy, liens and evictions were associated with increased risk of death for patients for multiple cancer types.

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A new study by researchers at the American Cancer Society (ACS) shows court-documented adverse financial events (AFEs) of pre-diagnosis bankruptcy, lien, or eviction were associated with increased risk of all-cause and cancer-specific mortality for multiple cancer types. The findings underscore lasting adverse consequences of patient financial vulnerability prior to incurring high out-of-pocket costs of cancer treatment. The data [were presented] at this year’s American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) annual meeting in Chicago, May 30-June 3, 2025.

In the study, led by Dr. Robin Yabroff, scientific vice president, health services research at the American Cancer Society, researchers analyzed records of adults aged 21 to 69 years of age diagnosed with common cancer types, including bladder, female breast, colorectal, kidney, lung and bronchus, oral cavity/pharynx, or prostate cancers or melanoma during 2014-2015.

The individuals were identified from the SEER population-based registries for Seattle, Louisiana, and Georgia. Registry data was linked with LexisNexis consumer data to identify history of court-documented AFEs of bankruptcies, liens, and evictions. Vital status and cause of death were examined through December 31, 2021. Models were adjusted for stage, age, race and ethnicity, marital status, registry, registry-specific income categories, and the interaction between income and registry.

Study results showed that of 58,796 individuals diagnosed with one of the eight selected cancers, 21,694 (36.9%) had a pre-diagnosis AFE, and there were 16,714 deaths (28.4%) during the study period. Pre-diagnosis AFEs were associated with a higher risk of all-cause mortality for individuals diagnosed with female breast, colorectal, oral cavity/pharynx, and prostate cancer and early- and late-stage melanoma, in adjusted models. Pre-diagnosis AFEs were also associated with a significantly higher risk of cancer-specific mortality for these five cancers.

Researchers stress that the findings are especially timely, with growing efforts by health care providers to screen and address patient health-related social needs as part of comprehensive oncology care.

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