

Article Summary: Cancers Diagnosed at Late Stages Despite Available Screening Tests

Last reviewed: September 8, 2014 • Last updated: March 5, 2012 • Archived March 19, 2015

Almost half of the colorectal and cervical cancer cases and a third of the breast cancer cases in the United States are diagnosed at late stages, when treatment is more difficult. In this first report to highlight the nationwide incidence of late-stage cancer diagnosis and cancer screening prevalence, the incidence rates of late-stage cancers differed by age, race/ethnicity, and state.

Researchers examined stage-specific cancer incidence rates and screening prevalence for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer by demographic characteristics in states. National data on new cancer cases were obtained from cancer registries affiliated with CDC's [National Program of Cancer Registries](#) and the National Cancer Institute's [Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results program](#). State-level cancer screening data were obtained from CDC's [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#).

Significant Findings

Demographic Incidence Rates

- Incidence rates of late-stage colorectal cancer increased with age and were highest among black men and women.
- Incidence rates of late-stage breast cancer were highest among women aged 70–79 years and black women.
- Incidence rates of late-stage cervical cancer were highest among women aged 50–79 years and Hispanic women.

State Incidence Rates

- Late-stage colon and rectum incidence rates ranged from 51.0 to 86.5, and were highest in Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Nebraska, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.
- Late-stage breast cancer incidence rates ranged from 92.2 to 132.1, and were highest in Alabama, the District of Columbia, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Washington.
- Late-stage cervical cancer incidence rates ranged from 3.0 to 8.3, and were highest in Arkansas, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, and Oklahoma.

Authors of the report noted that differences in late-stage cancer diagnoses may be explained partially by differences in screening rates in locations, and among different demographic groups.

Citation

Henley SJ, King JB, German RR, Richardson LC, Plescia M; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). [Surveillance of screening-detected cancers \(colon and rectum, breast, and cervix\)—United States, 2004–2006](#). *MMWR Surveillance Summaries* 2010;59(9):1–25.