

## Barrett's esophagus patients have same survival rates as general population

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New Mayo Clinic research has found that survival rates of patients with Barrett's esophagus, which can be a precursor for esophageal cancer, are no different than the survival rates for the general population. These findings were presented today at the 2009 American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) Annual Meeting in San Diego.

Barrett's esophagus is most often diagnosed in people who have long-term [gastroesophageal reflux disease](#) (GERD) -- a chronic [regurgitation](#) of acid from the stomach into the lower esophagus. A diagnosis of Barrett's esophagus can be concerning because it increases the risk of developing esophageal cancer.

"Patients who are diagnosed with Barrett's esophagus often fear they will develop esophageal cancer and not survive long," says Ganapathy Prasad, M.D., gastroenterologist, Mayo Clinic and lead author on the study. "Our research examined the [survival rates](#) of Barrett's esophagus patients from Olmsted County, Minn., over the past three decades, compared to a control group of patients. We wanted to study overall survival, predictors of survival and ultimate cause of death in patients."

In this study of 366 patients, the average patient age was 63 years, with 72 percent men and 18 percent women. All patients with a diagnosis of Barrett's esophagus from 1977 were identified using the Rochester Epidemiology Project resources in Olmsted County and confirmed via review of medical records. Only patients from Olmsted County were selected to reduce referral and selection bias.

Survival data and cause of death was ascertained from [medical records](#) of the 366 patients. Overall survival at 10 years after diagnosis was 68 percent. Causes of death included 28 percent from cardiovascular disease, 7 percent from dementia and 7 percent from esophageal cancer. The overall survival of this group was comparable to that of a control sample from the 2000 U.S. census.

"Our population-based study found that Barrett's esophagus patients are at no greater risk of dying than the rest of the population," says Dr. Prasad. "Patients who receive this diagnosis should seek proper treatment and care, but should also know that their odds of dying from [esophageal cancer](#) are low."

Source: Mayo Clinic ([news](#) : [web](#))

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