

Report: Younger women battling breast cancer face more aggressive diagnoses

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As the nation struggles with soaring health care costs, a new report by RTI International shows that younger women diagnosed with breast cancer face a significant treatment burden.

The report, published in *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment*, estimates the cost of breast cancer among women 45 years and younger.

"Younger women diagnosed with breast cancer often face more aggressive treatment, and are therefore more vulnerable to financial hardships," said Benjamin T. Allaire, report author and research economist at RTI. "This hardship leads some to forgo or delay necessary treatments, which may lead to immediate or future complications."

Analyzing data from the North Carolina Central Cancer Registry, report authors found that with private health insurance [younger women](#) cost substantially more to treat than [older women](#). Excess costs among women under the age of 45 enrolled in the registry for a year totaled \$97,000, while older women had excess costs of \$76,000. Younger women are more likely to be diagnosed with later stage cancers (Stages III and IV), and when they are, the excess costs to treat them are more than \$132,000, compared to \$124,000 for older women.

"Based on previous research, we knew that younger women cost more to treat than older women, but did not fully understand why," Allaire said. "Our new research reveals that it is because they are diagnosed with later stage cancers and they require more intense treatment. The magnitude of

these costs underscores the importance of maintaining insurance coverage."

The report concludes that more research is needed to explore the drivers of cost differences and the impact of higher costs on the quality of life for younger [breast cancer](#) survivors.

Provided by RTI International

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