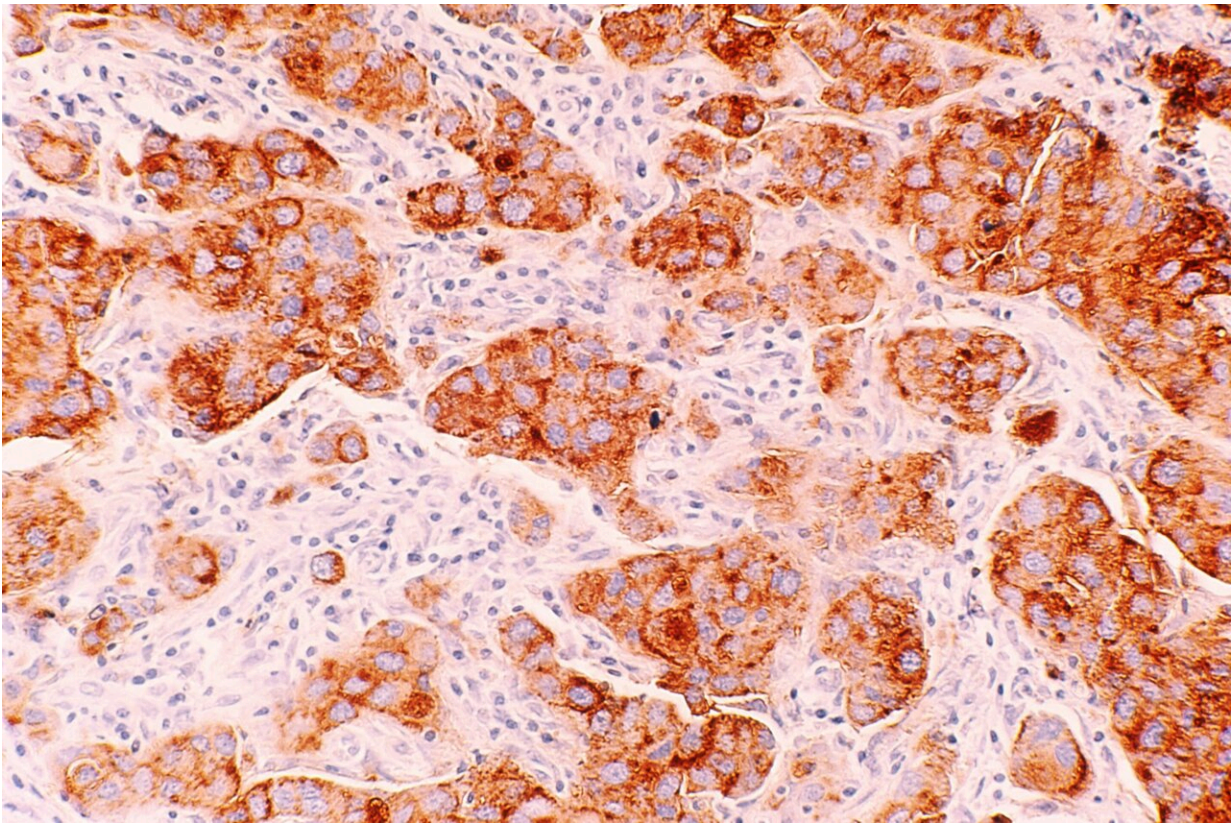


Race and geography linked to different risks of breast cancer treatment delays

January 23 2023



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

For patients with cancer, lengthy delays in treatment can decrease their chances of survival. In an analysis of 2004–2017 information on patients with breast cancer in North Carolina, Black patients were more likely to

experience such treatment delays than non-Black patients. Also, patients living in certain geographic regions of the state, regardless of race/ethnicity, tended to experience delays. The research is published online in *Cancer*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society.

For the study, Katherine E. Reeder-Hayes, MD, MBA, MS, of the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and her colleagues examined data on patients with stage I–III [breast cancer](#) who received surgery or chemotherapy as their first treatment and were listed in the Cancer Information and Population Health Resource, which links [cancer](#) registry and sociodemographic data to insurance claims. The research team defined a delay as >60 days from diagnosis to first treatment.

Among 32,626 patients, 19% were Black. Investigators found that 15% of Black patients experienced treatment delays compared with 8% of non-Black patients. Also, patients living in certain regions of the state were more likely to experience delays, with those in the highest-risk region being twice as likely to experience a delay as those in the lowest-risk region. This was the case for both Black and non-Black patients.

The magnitude of the racial gap in treatment delay varied by region, from 0.0% to 9.4%.

"On average, about 1 in 7 Black women in our study experienced a lengthy delay, but this risk varied depending on where the woman lives in the state. These delays weren't explained by the patient's distance from cancer treatment facilities, their specific stage of cancer or type of treatment, or what insurance they had," said Dr. Reeder-Hayes. "These findings suggest that the structure of local health care systems, rather than characteristics of the patients themselves, may better explain why some patients experience treatment delays and other adverse cancer outcomes."

The researchers are currently working on developing and testing tools for helping [patients](#) communicate about delays they're experiencing, and for alerting health care systems early when a patient's cancer treatment plan may be getting off track.

More information: Race, geography and risk of breast cancer treatment delays: a population-based study 2004-2015, *Cancer* (2023). DOI: [10.1002/cncr.34573](https://doi.org/10.1002/cncr.34573) , [acsjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley ... s/10.1002/cncr.34573](https://acsjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cncr.34573)

Provided by Wiley

Citation: Race and geography linked to different risks of breast cancer treatment delays (2023, January 23) retrieved 14 February 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-01-geography-linked-breast-cancer-treatment.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.