

COVID-19 Pandemic

Newly Diagnosed Cancers



How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected numbers of newly diagnosed cancers?



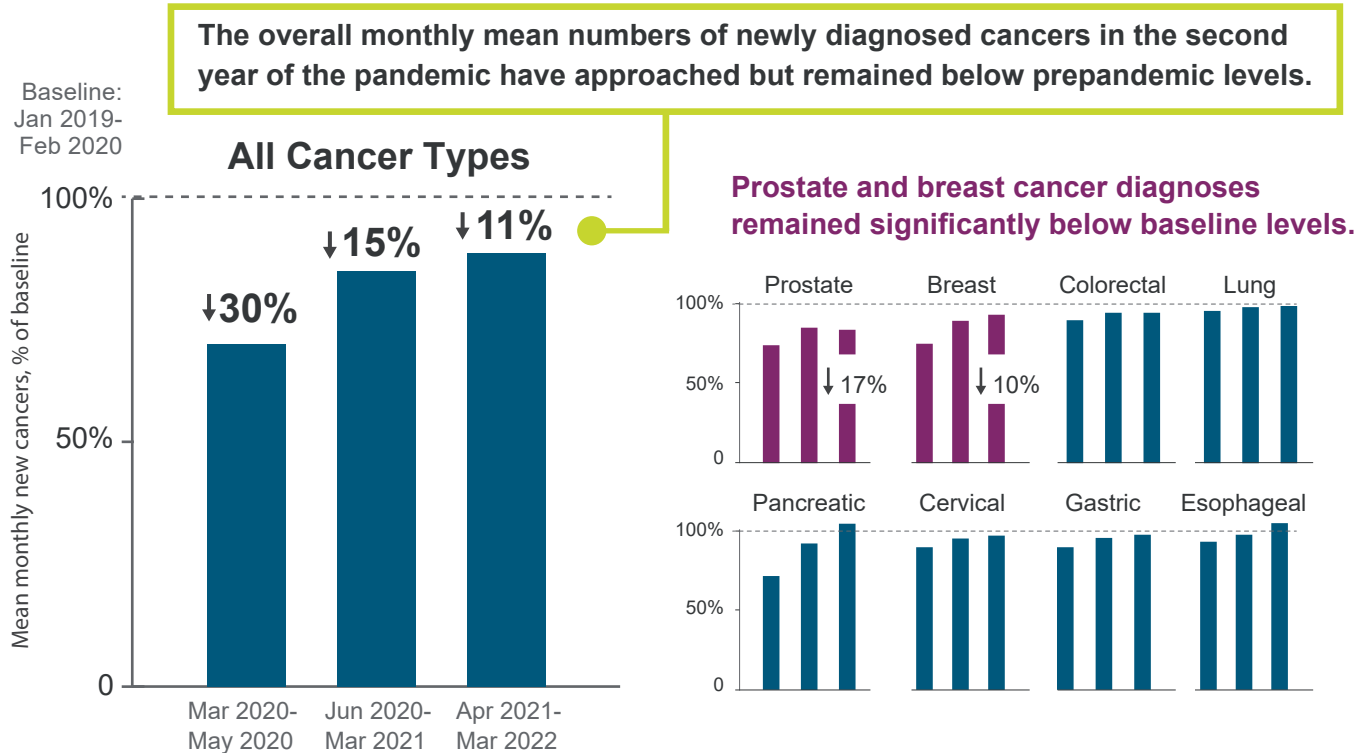
Background

Numbers of newly diagnosed cancers sharply declined in the first 2 months of the COVID-19 pandemic and remained low into the first full year. Whether these numbers have recovered over the second year of the pandemic has not been reported.



Results

Decreases in Newly Diagnosed Cancers



Although the numbers of cancer diagnoses have increased during the second year of the pandemic, the increases have not been enough to offset the large number of diagnoses that may have been missed or delayed early in the pandemic.

1. Kaufman HW, Chen Z, Niles JK, et al. New cancer diagnoses still lagging in the United States in second full year of COVID-19 pandemic. *JCO Clin Cancer Inform.* 2022;(6):e2200102. doi:10.1200/CCI.22.00102

COVID-19 Pandemic Newly Diagnosed Cancers

Article Title: New Cancer Diagnoses Still Lagging in the United States in Second Full Year of COVID-19 Pandemic

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Background

- During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released guidance that cancer screening and other prevention services be postponed.
- Previous nationwide studies reported substantial declines in cancer diagnoses during the first 7 weeks of the pandemic,¹ followed by only a partial rebound through March of 2021 to levels that remained below prepandemic levels.²
- **Objective:** This updated analysis examined changes in numbers of newly diagnosed cancers through March of 2022.

Methods

- In this cross-sectional study, patients were included if they (1) were tested at Quest Diagnostics for any cause from January 2018 through March of 2022; (2) were assigned an ICD-10 code for any of 8 cancer types (breast, colorectal, lung, pancreatic, cervical, gastric, esophageal, prostate); and (3) had no ICD-10 entries for the same cancer type since January 2018.
- The mean monthly numbers of newly diagnosed cancers during 3 pandemic periods were compared to those during the prepandemic period (January 2019 through February 2020):
 - 1st pandemic period: March 2020 through May 2020
 - 2nd pandemic period: June 2020 through March 2021
 - 3rd pandemic period: April 2021 through March 2022

Results

- Mean monthly numbers of newly diagnosed cancers increased over time but remained significantly below baseline values in all 3 periods:
 - Prepandemic period: 32,407
 - 1st pandemic period: 22,748 (29.8% decrease from baseline)
 - 2nd pandemic period: 27,609 (14.8% decrease from baseline; $P < .01$)
 - 3rd pandemic period: 28,782 (11.2% decrease from baseline; $P < .01$)
- The number of diagnoses during the 3rd pandemic period remained significantly below prepandemic levels for prostate and breast cancers ($P < .05$) but not other cancer types.

Conclusions

- Although the numbers of cancer diagnoses increased during the second year of the pandemic, the increase was not sufficient to reach prepandemic levels or offset the number of diagnoses that were likely delayed or missed early in the pandemic.
- Our findings support the continued need for careful planning to address outcomes related to delayed or undiagnosed cancers.

References

1. Kaufman HW, Chen Z, Niles J, Fesko Y. Changes in the number of US patients with newly identified cancer before and during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2020;3(8):e2017267. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.17267
2. Kaufman HW, Chen Z, Niles JK, et al. Changes in newly identified cancer among US patients from before COVID-19 through the first full year of the pandemic. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2021;4(8):e2125681. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.25681.

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