Cancer Diagnoses, Pathology Reports Dropped Early in Pandemic

In the US, new cases of 6 major types of cancer—colorectal, female breast, lung, pancreas, prostate, and thyroid—fell relative to the number of expected diagnoses during early 2020, when many health care facilities limited preventive cancer screening to help control the spread of SARS-CoV-2. The decline in diagnoses was greatest for early-stage cases, according to the second installment of the Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer, which included data from the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries.

The number of pathology reports also decreased during that time. By September 2020, new diagnoses for many types of cancers had returned to expected levels, the researchers reported in Cancer.

“These missed opportunities for early cancer detection are alarming, particularly for those vulnerable populations that continue to face significant barriers in accessing cancer care,” Monica M. Bertagnolli, MD, the director of the National Cancer Institute, said in a statement. – Emily Harris

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Note: Source references are available through embedded hyperlinks in the article text online.