

Data Collection and Cancer Health Equity

Research shows that while overall cancer mortality rates in the U.S. are dropping, populations that have been marginalized are bearing a disproportionate burden of preventable death and disease. Despite notable advances in cancer prevention, screening, and treatment, not all individuals benefit equitably from this important progress. For example we know:



People with lower socioeconomic status (SES) have higher cancer death rates and a higher likelihood of advanced-stage cancer diagnosis and a lower likelihood of receiving standard treatment than those with higher SES.¹



Black females have 40% higher breast cancer death rates than non-Hispanic white females despite similar incidence rates.¹

Death rates from lung cancer are highest in the South and parts of Appalachia for both males and females.²

People from the LGBTQ community may face barriers accessing culturally competent cancer care.³



Health equity in cancer care means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to prevent, find, treat, and survive cancer regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, SES, or zip code. Addressing health equity in cancer starts with timely, complete, and accurate data on populations and demographics that are facing cancer disparities.

Cancer Registries

Cancer registries are data systems designed for the collection, management and analysis of data that can inform policy at the local, state, and national levels. However, these data are often not readily accessible, and the structure, data collection, and data sharing policies can vary from state to state. One notable gap includes a two-year delay between data collection and reporting from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.⁴



ACS CAN supports funding and policies to promote timely collection and publication of demographic data that aid researchers and policymakers in identifying disparities to improve health equity in cancer prevention, detection, and treatment.

¹American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts and Figures, 2020. Accessed at <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and-statistics/annual-cancer-facts-and-figures/2020/cancer-facts-and-figures-2020.pdf>

²American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. Cancer Disparities: A Chartbook. Accessed at <https://www.fightcancer.org/sites/default/files/National%20Documents/Disparities-in-Cancer-Chartbook.pdf>.

³American Cancer Society. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) People with Cancer Fact Sheet. Accessed at <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/cancer-control/en/booklets-flyers/lgbtq-people-with-cancer-fact-sheet.pdf>.

⁴Freeman, M., Wilson, R. J., & Ryerson, B. (2017). Examination of Preliminary Cancer Surveillance Data from the National Program of Cancer Registries, Diagnosis Year 2012. *Journal of registry management*, 44(2), 62–68.