

New study shows patient/clinician identity differences are a factor in cancer care

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A new study by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center in collaboration with Dell Medical School, University of Minnesota, and

the Vanderbilt University Medical Center, using a national data sample from the National Institutes of Health All of Us Research Program, revealed that a small but statistically significant proportion of patients with cancer, especially younger and lower-income minorities, disproportionately reported delaying care because of patient/clinician racial, gender and cultural differences.

The study, led by student doctor and first author Vishal Patel from Dell Medical School at the University of Texas at Austin and senior author S. M. Qasim Hussaini, M.D., Chief Medical Oncology Fellow at the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center, was published March 30 in the journal *JAMA Oncology*.

The All of Us Research Program data is housed at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

Hussaini, along with program leadership, led recent efforts focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within the hematology-oncology fellowship program at Johns Hopkins with a dedicated program focused on curricular development, recruitment and retention, minority engagement, and health systems research.

The current work addresses the American Society of Clinical Oncology's recently announced strategic action plans to improve workforce [diversity](#) and clinician preparedness, says Hussaini. The findings, he notes, directly inform policies to increase uptake of educational priorities and workforce diversification within oncology.

"Our article provides important evidence that a lack of physician diversity may be contributing to disparities in care delivery for patients with [cancer](#) and can be harmful to patients," says Patel.

"This represents the kind of important research that needs to be done if

we are to get optimal care to all Americans. The greatest reason for racial health disparities in cancer outcomes is racial disparities in receipt of quality care," says Otis W. Brawley, M.D., Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Oncology and Epidemiology.

More information: Vishal R. Patel et al, Prevalence of Delayed or Forgone Care Due to Patient-Clinician Identity Discordance Among US Cancer Survivors, *JAMA Oncology* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamaoncol.2023.0242](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaoncol.2023.0242)

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