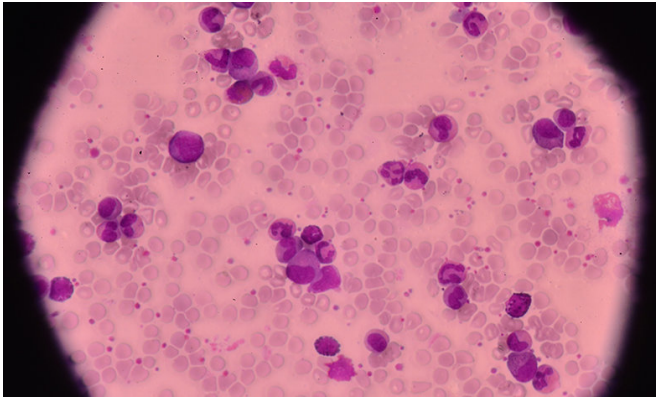


# Poorer survival rates for adults with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia living in deprived areas

1 February 2018, by Amy Huxtable



Credit: University of Sheffield

Adults with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia living in deprived areas of England have poorer survival rates, a new study has found.

The research, conducted by experts from the University of Sheffield, also found [adult patients](#) treated at hospitals which manage small numbers of [leukaemia](#) cases also have a significantly lower survival rate.

Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia is a type of blood cancer that starts from young white blood cells called lymphocytes in the bone marrow – the soft inner part of the bones where new blood cells are made. The condition is rare, especially in adults.

The findings, published in the journal *BMC Cancer*, show adult [patients](#) with the condition living in more socioeconomically deprived areas had around 15-20 per cent higher mortality than patients living in the least deprived areas.

Meanwhile, patients treated at hospitals which manage small numbers of patients with this rare

condition had around 30 per cent higher mortality compared to hospitals treating larger numbers of adult patients with the condition.

Professor Ravi Maheswaran and his team from the University of Sheffield's School of Health and Related Research (ScHARR) analysed anonymised NHS data on [hospital](#) admissions.

They found 2,921 adults aged over 18 years were diagnosed with this type of leukaemia from 2001-12. They also assessed follow-up data on survival rates up to 2013.

Their results indicate that around 1 in 160,000 adults in England will develop this type of leukaemia each year.

Estimated five-year survival for all adults, which included elderly patients with the condition, was not good with only around a third of all patients predicted to survive five years after diagnosis. The results did however show that survival had improved over the time period examined.

Professor Maheswaran from ScHARR, said: "The findings are likely to have significant implications for the organisation of NHS services for the treatment of adults with this rare but serious condition.

"These results, although concerning, are from a single study and further work is needed to confirm our findings.

"If the association between high deprivation and poorer survival is confirmed, more investigation will be needed to understand why adults with this type of leukaemia living in deprived areas have poorer survival and what can be done to address this inequality.

He added: "Confirmation that hospitals treating few patients with this rare condition have worse outcomes would mean that the NHS should seriously consider if treatment services for [adults](#) with [acute lymphoblastic leukaemia](#) should mainly be provided by specialist centres in order to improve survival."

Provided by University of Sheffield

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