

Research suggests cancer care systems need to be more patient-centered

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A recent review collected and analyzed 54 studies from the UK, USA, and Canada. The findings highlight numerous factors that were linked with worse patient experience, showing how cancer care may not be meeting the needs of all patients.

The results, published in *eClinicalMedicine* by *The Lancet*, formed part of the research conducted by Dr. Saleh Alessy as part of his PhD thesis.

Measuring and understanding patients' experiences has recently become important in assessing the quality of [cancer care](#), but the individual and [social factors](#) that shape experiences have been poorly understood.

Dr Saleh Alessy and Dr Elizabeth Davies, Clinical Reader in Cancer and Public Health in the School of Cancer & Pharmaceutical Sciences, sought to address this gap by reviewing papers that have explored the experiences of patients in cancer care. Their [systematic review](#) included 54 studies that used survey data from the UK, Canada, or the USA.

Analyzing their findings, the authors identified several factors that were associated with worse patient experience including but not limited to: patients from an ethnic minority background, patients from a lower socioeconomic background, and patients currently managing other mental or physical health conditions.

Patients who receive a [poor prognosis](#) for their cancer, or patients with any type of cancer who accessed treatment via [emergency care](#), also consistently reported a worse experience for cancer care.

These findings, observed within all three countries, show that the improvements made within patient care have not been felt proportionately, with many patients from vulnerable backgrounds still not having their needs met.

"Patient experience is an important measure of how cancer care is patient centered. This large study can help policy makers to improve efforts aimed at delivering better experiences of patient-centered care," says Dr. Saleh Alessy.

As the importance of patients' experiences continues to grow in cancer care, policymakers will need to identify areas for improvement. These new results highlight the need to develop cancer care systems that are more tailored towards individuals and their specific backgrounds, different prognoses and the different pathways they take throughout their care.

The authors are hopeful that summarizing the insights from research on patient experience can help policymakers and practitioners provide more flexible and patient-centered cancer care.

More information: Saleh A. Alessy et al, Factors influencing cancer patients' experiences of care in the USA, United Kingdom, and Canada: A systematic review, *eClinicalMedicine* (2022). [DOI:](#)

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