

Impact of COVID-19 Cancer Screenings in the United States of America, Canada, and Brazil: An International Comparative Study

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OBJECTIVES

The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted healthcare priorities, stressing hospital systems and redirecting resources. This change has interrupted access to preventive cancer screenings and reduced coaction between medical professional-patient. This study investigates how cancer screenings changed during the COVID-19 pandemic (2019-2021) in the USA, Canada and Brazil.

METHOD

This study reviews academic articles, health reports, and government data on how the pandemic affected cancer screenings. The data gathered from official health data in the United States of America (USA), Canada and Brazil, including medical records, national health databases, and screening statistics. The analysis is conducted to reveal changes in access to screening services for colorectal cancer (CRC), breast cancer, hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), and cervical cancer.

RESULTS

Serious decreases in cancer screenings were noticed globally during the COVID-19. In Canada, diagnosed with colorectal cancer (CRC) decreased by 55%. This decrease remained 20% lower than the average in previous years. By August 2020, an approximately 467 cases had gone undiagnosed. In the USA, HCC screenings decreased by 44%, whereas cervical cancer screenings for women aged 21-29 dropped by 78%. Moreover, mammography screenings saw a significant decline, plummeting from 180,724 in March-May 2019 to mere 1,681 during the corresponding period in 2020. This decrease resulted in fewer detections of breast cancer and an increase in symptomatic, aggressive tumor manifestations. Similarly, Brazil saw a 39.18% decrease in breast cancer screenings.

PERCENTAGE DECREASE IN SCREENING BY CANCER TYPES



CONCLUSIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic seriously reduced cancer screening programs in the USA, Canada, and Brazil. This led to big drops in diagnoses of different cancers. This decrease shows how much the pandemic has affected preventive healthcare, the need for plans to tackle the backlog and guarantee timely cancer detection and treatment in the period after the pandemic.



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