



Examining Gastrointestinal Cancer Effects and Its Impact on Human Health

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Description

Gastrointestinal (GI) cancers, which affect organs in the digestive system such as the esophagus, stomach, liver, pancreas, colon and rectum, present significant issue to global health. These cancers are among the most common and harmful worldwide, with their effects extending far beyond the individual to impact families, healthcare systems and economies. Understanding the effects of gastrointestinal cancer and its impact on human health is essential for improving prevention, diagnosis and treatment strategies. Gastrointestinal cancers include a wide range of malignancies, each with unique characteristics and health consequences. Colorectal cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths globally. It often develops from benign polyps that become malignant over time. Symptoms include changes in bowel habits, rectal bleeding and abdominal pain. The disease's impact includes reduced quality of life due to chronic symptoms and potential long-term issues from surgery or chemotherapy.

Stomach cancer typically arises from the lining of the stomach and is associated with risk factors such as *Helicobacter pylori* infection, diet and genetics. Patients often experience weight loss, nausea and digestive difficulties. Advanced cases can lead to severe malnutrition and metastasis significantly affecting overall health. Liver cancer, often linked to Hepatitis B and C infections or cirrhosis is a highly aggressive cancer with poor survival rates. It can cause jaundice,

abdominal swelling and systemic symptoms such as fatigue and muscle wasting. The liver's central role in metabolism means that liver cancer often disrupts multiple bodily systems. Pancreatic cancer is extremely challenging to detect early and has one of the lowest survival rates among cancers. Symptoms include jaundice, weight loss and severe abdominal pain. Its impact on health is significant, as the pancreas plays a vital role in digestion and blood sugar regulation.

The effects of gastrointestinal cancer extend beyond physical symptoms, influencing mental, emotional and social well-being. GI cancers often cause painful symptoms such as pain, fatigue and digestive issues, which can severely limit daily activities. Treatments, including surgery, chemotherapy and radiation, can result in additional side effects such as nausea, diarrhea and weakened immunity. For many patients, the cumulative physical impact is immense, reducing life expectancy and quality of life. The digestive system's central role in nutrient absorption means that GI cancers often lead to malnutrition. For example, stomach and pancreatic cancers can cause random weight loss and deficiencies in essential nutrients. Even after treatment, survivors may experience issues dietary restrictions and impaired digestion. The psychological burden of a cancer diagnosis is significant. Patients with GI cancers often experience anxiety, depression and fear due to the serious nature of these diseases and the uncertainty of outcomes.

The chronic symptoms and the side effects of treatment can further impair mental health issues. Efforts to reduce the impact of gastrointestinal cancers focus on prevention, early detection and specific treatments. Screening programs for colorectal cancer, such as colonoscopies, have significantly improved early detection rates and survival outcomes. Advances in imaging and biomarkers show potential for detecting other GI cancers earlier, when treatment is more effective.

Conclusion

Gastrointestinal cancers represent a significant challenge to global health, affecting millions of lives annually. Their impact on physical, mental and social well-being defines the need for continued studies, equitable access to care and public health strategies for prevention and early detection. By examining the various effects of GI cancers, one can improve outcomes for patients and reduce the broader societal burden of these devastating diseases.

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