



The Impact of Lymphedema on Cancer Survivors

An estimated 3-5 million Americans are affected by chronic lymphatic system failure (lymphedema), with 1.5-3 million being Medicare beneficiaries.¹ Two-thirds of all cases are cancer-related.²

Cancer: Lymphedema Beyond Breast Cancer³

- “Lymphedema has been described as one of the most significant survivorship Issue.”
- This systematic review and meta-analysis of cancer-related secondary lymphedema showed an overall incidence rate of 15.5%, with individual rates varying by malignancy.

Journal of Clinical Oncology: Lymphedema in Breast Cancer Survivors: Incidence, Degree, Time Course, Treatment, and Symptoms.⁴

- “Lymphedema is considered one of the most distressing and debilitating complications of breast cancer treatment.”
- This 5-year study showed a breast cancer-related lymphedema incidence rate of 42%.

Supportive Care in Cancer: “It still affects our economic situation”: long-term economic burden of breast cancer and lymphedema⁵

- Summary: The financial fallout from breast cancer can last years after diagnosis, particularly for those with lymphedema, a common side effect from treatment, causing cumulative and cascading economic consequences for survivors, their families, and society. Researchers found that women with lymphedema after breast cancer treatment had an out-of-pocket average cost of \$2,306 per year, compared with \$1,090 for those without the condition.
- “Participants reported that lack of coverage for lymphedema-related costs contributed to less lymphedema management and exacerbation of lymphedema.”
- “Our findings reinforce the need for actions at the policy, provider, and individual patient level, especially for those with lymphedema.”

¹ <https://lymphedematreatmentact.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Prevalence-of-Lymphedema.pdf>

² <http://lymphedematreatmentact.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Lymphedema-Not-One-Disease.pdf>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20665892>

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19064976>

⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30121786>