

Understanding Labor Market and Retirement Behavior for Aged 50+ Cancer Survivors before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from the Survey for Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)

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INTRODUCTION & OBJECTIVE



The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the healthcare access and labor market status of cancer patients and survivors in an unprecedented manner, bringing intense pressures to both cancer patients and the healthcare system, welfare services and labor market services, and forcing necessary reforms towards labor market and healthcare system resilience.

This study aims to explore the labor market disparities among cancer patients and survivors aged 50+ in Europe before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. We investigate the labor market status and potential disparities between adults aged 50+ with a cancer history and healthy adults before and during the pandemic, in 27 European countries and Israel using data from the Survey for Health, Ageing and Retirement (SHARE).

METHODS

This research focus on the workforce aged 50+ in 27 European countries using data from the Survey for Health, Ageing and Retirement (SHARE) waves 4 - 8 (2011-2019) before the Pandemic, the SHARE Corona Survey Wave 1 between June and August 2020 and SHARE Corona Survey Wave 2 between June and August 2021 (2nd SCS). The sample included adults with a self-reported physician diagnosis of cancer before the pandemic (n=14,266) and during the pandemic (n=3,649), plus healthy aged 50+ population with no cancer history before the pandemic (n= 234,995) and during the pandemic (n = 51,095).

Countries include Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Israel.

We evaluated the disparities and trends on

- Employment status before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic;
- Work interruptions and length of work interruptions during the COVID-19 Pandemic;
- Retirement decisions during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We explain the preliminary Descriptive Summaries. The next steps are to explore the determinants of labor market status among cancer patients using multilinear regression models.

RESULTS

COVID-19 Pandemic and Retirement Decisions among Aged 50+ Adult in Europe (Years 2020 and 2021) : Healthy vs Cancer Patients

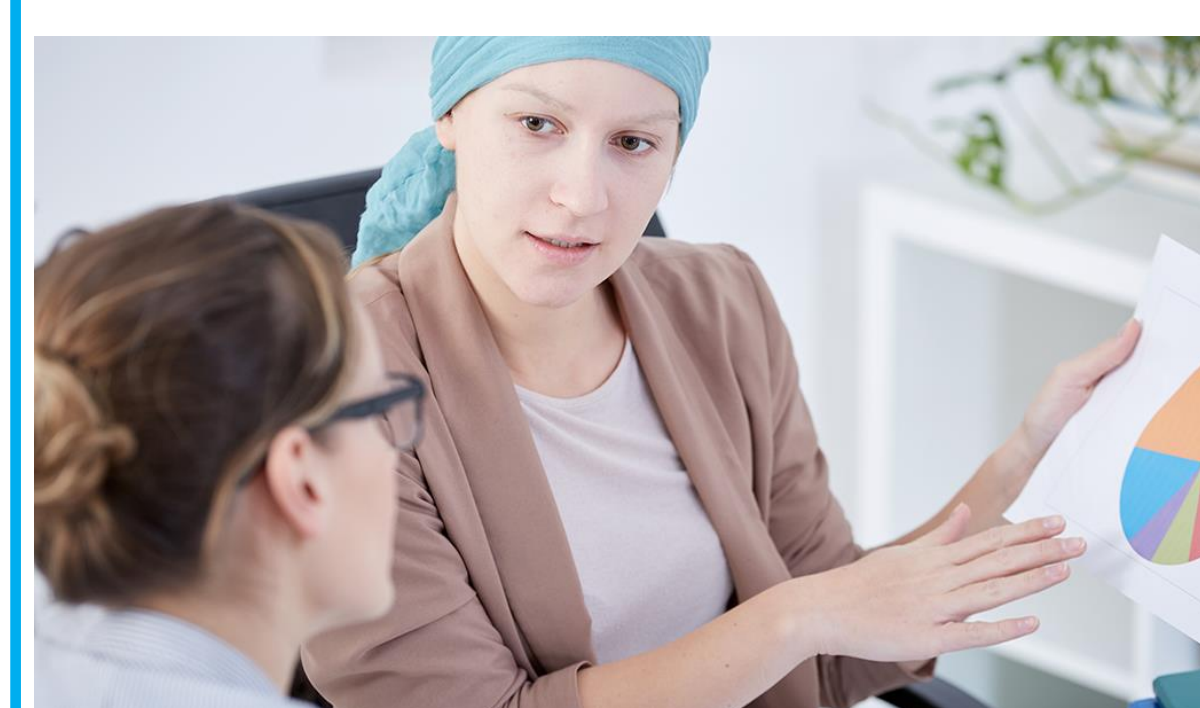
Retirement Decision	2020 and 2021	2020 and 2021
	Healthy Adults	Cancer Patients
Retirement as planned	787(71.7%)	33(57.9%)
Retirement earlier than planned	192(17.5%)	20(35.1%)
Retirement later than planned	118(10.8%)	4(7.0%)

Data: Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) Wave 8. COVID-19 Survey 1 and SHARE Wave 9. COVID-19 Survey 2. Release version: 8.0.0.

DISCUSSION

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe may result in increasing labor market disparities between cancer patients and healthy people.

Limitation: Country-level analysis for cancer patients and survivors in SHARE may be limited because SHARE contains a small sample size of cancer patients and survivors aged 50+ who are active in the labor market during the COVID-19 Pandemic in each country.



Importance for policy makers in the EU to design possible approaches to improve work outcomes, including policy and patient-facing interventions.

RESULTS

Employment Patterns among Aged 50+ Adults in Europe 2010-2019 Healthy vs Cancer Patients and Survivors

Current Job Status (2010-2019)	Healthy Adults	Cancer Patients and Survivors
Retired	132,650(56.9%)	10,080(71.6%)
Employed (inc. self-employed)	66,563(28.6%)	1,807 (12.8%)
Unemployed	6,638(2.9%)	203(1.4%)
Permanently sick or disabled	4,841(2.1%)	906(6.4%)
Homemaker and other	22,254(9.6%)	1082(7.7%)

Data: Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) Waves 4-8. Release version: 8.0.0.

Employment Patterns, and Work Outcomes during the Covid-19 among the Aged 50+ Adults Pandemic in Europe

Labor Market Status during the Pandemic(2020-2021)	Healthy Adults	Cancer Patients and Survivors
Retired before the pandemic	58,810(71.4%)	2,974(81.5%)
No interruption: Continuous working	20,727(25.2%)	613(16.8%)
Short interruption: 1-8 weeks	1,408(1.7%)	30(0.8%)
Long interruption: >= 8 weeks	1,440(1.7%)	32(0.8%)

Data: Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) Wave 8. COVID-19 Survey 1 and SHARE Wave 9. COVID-19 Survey 2. Release version: 8.0.0.

CONCLUSIONS

During 2010-2019, cancer patients and survivors aged 50+ were less likely to be employed. During the pandemic, cancer patients and survivors aged 50+ were less likely to continue working.

Disparities exist in early retirement decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic years 2020-2021, cancer patients and survivors were more likely to choose early retirement.

Future research may focus on the effects of various government policies and programmes, in particular, the policy interventions towards coordination and cooperation between healthcare services and employment services.

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