

Can You Chip In?

They're trying to change history—don't let them. The Wayback Machine is a crucial resource in the fight against disinformation, and now more than ever we need your help. Right now we're preserving history as it unfolds, keeping track of who's saying what and when—all without charging for access, selling user data, or running ads. Instead, the Internet Archive (which runs this project) relies on the generosity of individuals to help us keep the record straight.

We don't ask often, but right now, we have a 2-to-1 Matching Gift Campaign, tripling the impact of every donation. If each of our users gave just \$10, we could end this fundraiser today—so if you find all these bits and bytes useful, please pitch in.

—Brewster Kahle, Founder, Internet Archive

Choose an amount (USD)

\$10	\$25
\$50	Custom: \$ <input type="text"/>

- I'll generously add \$0.52 to cover fees.
- Make this monthly


Continue

[Maybe later](#)

Race-specific screening guidelines could spare Black liver cancer patients from worse outcomes

By [Ana Mulero](#)

Last modified February 26, 2021. Published February 26, 2021.

 A new study says liver cancer screening guidelines must change. (AP Photo/Jessica Kourkounis)

A new study says liver cancer screening guidelines must change. (AP Photo/Jessica Kourkounis)



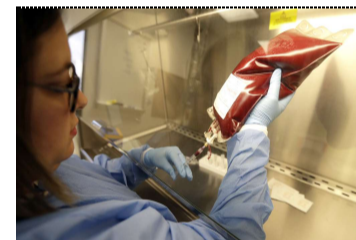
a new study, researchers at New York's Mount Sinai are calling for revised screening guidelines to reduce the number of African Americans with hepatitis C who are dying from liver cancer at rates higher than people from other racial groups, and they are seeing similarly disconcerting patterns in ongoing research into other subsets of Black patients with liver cancer.

The study, published in *Cancer* on Thursday, confirmed that the livers of Black patients with hepatitis C — a type of liver infection that is known to be the strongest driver of liver cancer in the U.S. — deteriorate less quickly and so may not trigger a screening. It documented the surprising finding that one-third of Black patients do not qualify for a screening under current guidelines.

Related sections

Life Sciences

Recent articles



Life Sciences

Revelation of how bone marrow regenerates after chemotherapy could help patients recover from cancer

By Miles Martin



Law & Politics, Life Sciences

Kids from disadvantaged neighborhoods face a greater obesity risk. But boys and girls aren't impacted equally.

By Reece Wallace



To arrive at their findings, the researchers conducted a retrospective study of 1,195 patients with hepatocellular carcinoma, the most common type of primary liver cancer, 390 of whom identified as African American.

The team found that the tumors in Black patients carry worse prognostic features that also contribute to racial disparities in prognoses. They were more likely to metastasize and had a higher grade of inflammation compared to other racial groups. They were larger and more aggressive, numerous and invasive, said Umut Sarpel, an associate professor of surgery and medical education at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

Sarpel told *The Academic Times* that the hepatitis C work was just an initial focus for the team. A data set that the colleagues have been building over the past half-year, which is set to be published in the coming months, replicates the findings for all other causes of liver cancer, including hepatitis B, alcohol use, nonalcoholic steatohepatitis, diabetes and others, she said.

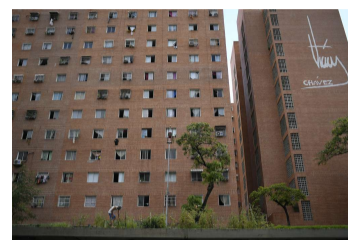
"We have recently completed a study in patients with non-HCV liver cancer and see similar findings," she said.

... that Black patients with liver cancer are "signifi... ergo liver transpla... ive

Business & Economics, Law & Politics

Who are female farmers? They're often educated, near cities — and in need of day care.

By Ariane Lange



Law & Politics

Public housing recedes as left-wing priority as parties court affluent voters

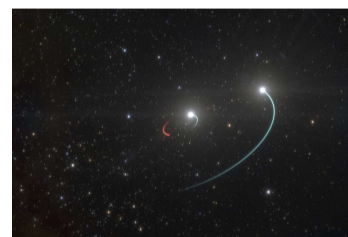
By Reece Wallace



Physical Sciences, Life Sciences

Eggshell membrane could help with bone regeneration

By Ana Mulero



Physical Sciences

New black hole observations may prove Hawking right

By Monisha Ravisetti



Life Sciences, Computing & Robotics

detect COVID-19 outbreaks faster, scientists say

By Kate Baggaley

We use cookies to improve your experience on our site and to show you relevant advertising.

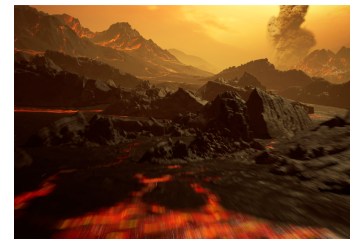
treatment for hepatocellular carcinoma, compared with other racial groups. Previous research also shows that Black patients have a more advanced tumor stage by the time they are diagnosed with hepatocellular carcinoma, as well as lower rates of surgical intervention and survival.

The incidence of this type of cancer — and the mortality rates — are also higher in Black patients. One [study](#) last year reported 16,770 deaths from liver cancer among Black Americans between 1998 and 2016. It found that the rate of death increased by 77.7% among this population, whereas the rate among white Americans grew by 43.1%.

Sarpel set out to conduct the new study with the goal of identifying reasons behind such disparities.

Mount Sinai researchers retrospectively reviewed the records of patients with hepatitis C and hepatocellular carcinoma who were treated at their institution between 2003 and 2018. The team compared imaging, laboratory and pathological features between Black and non-Black cohorts, which included patients who had self-identified as white, Hispanic or Asian/Pacific Islander.

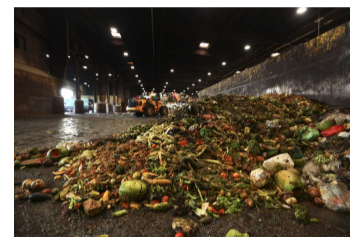
Pointing to a 2018 [study](#) that similarly found triple-negative breast cancer — in which the receptors typically found in breast cancer are lacking — to be more common in Black patients, Sarpel noted that she



Physical Sciences

First Earth-like exoplanet with discernable atmospheric conditions found

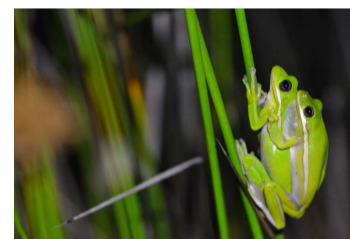
By Monisha Raviseti



Life Sciences, Business & Economics

Comprehensive UN study finds 17% of all food is wasted

By Theo Wayt



Life Sciences

Tree frogs use their lungs like noise-canceling headphones

By Miles Martin

tumors might be worse in these individuals, which they were. But the finding that surprised her was that one-third of Black patients fell outside the current screening guidelines.

This means that Black patients with hepatitis C and liver cancer are "getting hit at both ends of the spectrum," Sarpel said. "Not only are the tumors that are developing worse players," but also, these patients are "not even having the opportunity to have their tumors detected at an early enough stage, because a third of the patients aren't even meeting the criteria for screening that we currently use as nationally accepted guidelines."

The research follows a smaller pilot [study from 2018](#) of 42 Black patients that was conducted by coauthor Andrea Branch, a hepatologist who has been studying cirrhosis, a form of chronic liver damage that is often caused by hepatitis. Currently, the development of cirrhosis is what triggers a medical recommendation for liver cancer screening.

Sarpel, who is also a surgical oncologist, reached out to Branch in hopes of expanding on her study. The larger study confirms what the pilot study demonstrated: The livers of Black patients with hepatitis C progress to cirrhosis more slowly, so they have better liver function at diagnosis of liver cancer than other patients.

That's what led the researchers to advocate for revising screening guidelines, to reflect that tumors tend to progress less quickly in Black patients with liver cancer before reaching the point of cirrhosis.

There are at least two ways to do this, Sarpel said, noting in an example of race-specific caveats that age-based triggers exist in the screening guidelines for Asian patients with hepatitis B. Guidelines could be similarly revised to address the disparity seen in Black patients with liver cancer, she argues.

"We know that liver cancer is more common the older you get, but in some groups, clearly, liver cancer occurs in early ages," Sarpel said. Another potential way to revise the guidelines relates to lowering the score of the FIB-4 index, which helps estimate the amount of scarring in the liver, to an earlier stage.

Committees of thought leaders and experts in the field of cancer, such as the American Joint Committee on Cancer, are responsible for considering all the evidence available to refine screening guidelines.

The next step for the research team is to compare patients with liver cancer whose tumors developed the traditional way in the setting of cirrhosis with the one-third of patients whose tumors developed before cirrhosis. The researchers expect to find differences between these

two groups. Ultimately, Sarpel envisions additional research leading to screening based on a particular gene.

"We won't be screening by whether you're Black, white or Asian," she said.

"We will be screening you by whether you have this particular gene," and honing in on what makes a gene more common in a particular community.

The study, "Hepatitis C-Positive Black Patients Develop Hepatocellular Carcinoma at Earlier Stages of Liver Disease and Present With a More Aggressive Phenotype," was published in Cancer on Feb. 25. The authors of the study are Tali Shaltiel, Serena Zheng, Cleo Siderides, Elizabeth M. Gleeson, Jacquelyn Carr, Eric R. Pletcher, Noah A. Cohen, Benjamin J. Golas, Deepa R. Magge, Daniel M. Labow, Andrea D. Branch and Umut Sarpel; Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

© 2020 Fastinform, Inc.

[About Us](#) · [Terms of Use](#) · [Privacy Policy](#) · [Contact](#) · [Work with us](#)