

Socioeconomic Status and Access to Care Do Not Account for the Rising Incidence of Thyroid Cancer

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ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY ● ● ● ● ●

This study is a sophisticated analysis of the role of socioeconomic status and access to care as factors that might explain the increased incidence of thyroid cancer in the past 30 years. Because there were no significant differences in rising incidence between those in the lowest SES quartile and the combination of the other three quartiles and because there were no differences between regions with different access to care, the authors conclude that SES and access to care do not explain the rising incidence of thyroid cancer.

Therefore, it is likely that there is a real increase in the incidence of thyroid cancer.

A limitation of the study is that the SEER database does not contain economic data, so the data used was on a county basis rather than on an individual basis. In addition, only 4% of the patients were in the lowest SES quartile; the SEER registries tended to be in areas with higher SES than the average U.S. population. Nevertheless, the study provides reliable data showing that the rising incidence of thyroid cancer cannot easily be explained on the basis of ascertainment bias.

References

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