



BOSTON, Mass. (Feb. 5, 2016) – According to a paper published today in *Cancer Medicine*, cancer has a devastating and age-specific impact on the finances of young adult survivors, and increased dialogue between healthcare providers and young adults has the potential to empower this population at risk for adverse financial and psychosocial outcomes, and steer them towards reputable sources of financial support.

The [paper](#), "**The Cost of Cancer: A Retrospective Analysis of the Financial Impact of Cancer on Young Adults**," examines data collected by [The Samfund](#) from 2007-2013 that highlights the challenges of young adults who have faced severe financial toxicity and negative economic consequences as a result of their diagnosis and treatment.

"We had a vast repository of program data from the past several years, and we knew this was an important story to tell because of the lack of a spotlight on young adults facing financial toxicity," said Michelle Landwehr, M.P.H., Chief Operating Officer at The Samfund and lead author of the study. "While the recent [Fred Hutchinson study](#) brought additional notice to the financial difficulty faced by the cancer population at large, we rarely see anything that shows what the young adult population is dealing with."

"We hear all the time from young adult survivors who have told us, anecdotally, that the subject of cost never even came up with their doctors; oftentimes they cope by completely ignoring the topic or otherwise they stress about it all the way through their treatment and long after, which is the last thing they need." Landwehr said. A [study](#) out of Duke Cancer Institute also suggested a link between financial distress and higher mortality rates.

In addition to the cost of medication, hospital bills, co-pays and related treatment necessities, young adults are particularly affected by their station in life: they may have student loans, no established credit, and have no health benefits from jobs that they may have just started, if they are working at all. Oftentimes, this population has had to stop work while undergoing treatment and has no income, while their bills continue to pile up and multiply. Given their age and life stage, they likely lack parental support but haven't yet established significant savings of their own.

"We found that financial indicators of young adult cancer survivors are worse than their healthy peers in many domains. Further, young adult survivors in their 30s report more perilous pre-funding financial situations than younger grant recipients, who may be covered by their parents' insurance policies," said Rebecca Johnson, M.D., senior author of the paper.

To quantify the financial burden of cancer in young adults, a retrospective analysis was performed of data collected from Samfund grant applications of 334 young adult cancer survivors. Grants were awarded between 2007 and 2013 and grant recipients were consented electronically in 2014 for retrospective data analysis. They ranged from 17 to 39 years of age at the time of their grant applications. Descriptive statistics were calculated and compared to the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey and US census data on age-matched peers.

Landwehr and co-author and colleague Samantha Watson, CEO of The Samfund, are available for interviews upon request.

About The Samfund

The Samfund, a national nonprofit organization, supports young adult cancer survivors in the United States as they recover from the financial impact of cancer treatment. Through direct financial assistance and free online support and education, The Samfund helps young adults move forward towards their personal, professional, and academic goals. For more information, visit <http://www.thesamfund.org>.