Three new articles present trends in survival for patients with ovarian, colon, and breast cancer in the United States by race and stage. Published early online in CANCER, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society, the findings reveal large, consistent, and persistent racial disparities in survival.

For the analyses, a team led by investigators at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention used information from the second CONCORD study, which reported survival for patients who had cancer diagnosed between 1995 and 2009 in 67 countries and enabled the comparison of survival of patients in the United States with other countries.

In the analysis of ovarian cancer data, researchers found that among the 172,849 ovarian cancers diagnosed from 2001–2009, more than one-half were diagnosed at a distant stage. Five-year net survival was 39.6 percent in 2001–2003 and 41 percent in 2004–2009. Black women had consistently worse survival compared with white women (29.6 percent from 2001–2003 and 31.1 percent from 2004–2009), despite similar stage distributions. Stage-specific survival for all races combined between 2004 and 2009 was 86.4 percent for localized stage, 60.9 percent for regional stage, and 27.4 percent for distant stage.

Concerning colon cancer, the five-year net survival increased 0.9 percent from 63.7 percent during 2001–2003 to 64.6 percent for 2004–2009. Survival improved for both blacks and whites, but the five-year net survival among blacks diagnosed during 2004–2009 had still not reached the level of survival of whites diagnosed during 1990–1994, some 15–20 years earlier. Also, more black than white patients were diagnosed at distant stage in 2001–2003 (21.5 percent versus 17.2 percent, respectively), and in 2004–2009 (23.3 percent versus 18.8 percent).

In the analysis of breast cancer data, five-year net survival was very high (88.2 percent), but survival was more than 10 percentage points lower for black women than for white women—a difference that persisted over time. From 2001–2003, survival was 89.1 percent for white women and 76.9 percent for black women. From 2004–2009, survival was 89.6 percent for white women and 78.4 percent for black women.