

TIME ANALYSIS UNTIL THE START OF TREATMENT FOR COLON CANCER IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF BRAZIL

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Introduction: According to Instituto Nacional de Câncer (INCA), there are around 45,000 new Colon Cancer cases estimated per year in Brazil between 2023 and 2025, being the third most common cancer in the country and in the Northern region. Colon Cancer presents unspecific symptoms, such as changes in bowel habits and abdominal discomfort. Therefore, patients delay medical help and the discovery of the neoplasia's diagnosis, affecting the treatment. **Objectives:** Analyze the time until start of Colon Cancer treatment in the Northern Region, between 2020 and 2024. **Methods:** A retrospective, observational, and descriptive study was performed, using secondary data available in the DATASUS system, in the oncology panel section. The ICD C18 (malignant colon neoplasm) and the Northern Region were selected. The variables analyzed were year of diagnosis and gender. The treatments up to 30 days were considered early treatments, between 31 and 60 days were considered intermediate treatments, and over 60 days were considered late treatments. Then, the data were tabulated in spreadsheets in the Microsoft Excel program for interpretation. **Results:** 3.406 diagnostics of Colon Cancer were registered in the Northern Region of Brazil between 2020 and 2024, of which 1.244 cases don't have treatment information. Regarding the time until treatment, the most common was up to 30 days, with 930 cases (43,01%), followed by over 60 days, with 808 (37,37%). The year that had the most early treatments was 2023, with 217 cases, followed by 2022, with 183, and by 2020, with 179. Concerning the late treatment, the year with the most cases was also 2023, with 219 cases, and the year with the least cases was 2020, with 81. About the gender, women were the majority of patients that started treatment early, with 497 cases (22,98%), and men were the ones who started most over 60 days, with 407 (18,82%). **Conclusion:** In view of this data, it is observed that the majority of the patients started the treatment early, probably due to the aggressiveness of the illness. In the period analyzed, the year 2020 had one of the most treatments up to 30 days and the least over 60 days, regardless of the fact that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, most of the elective procedures, such as the

colonoscopy, were postponed as a result of the overloaded health services. Moreover, it was noticed that women were more favorable to receive treatment sooner, while men tended to receive later treatment, reinforcing a gender inequality since all patients should receive treatment as early as possible. Hence, it becomes evident the need of developing new efficient public health policies that address the importance of early cancer treatment, especially regarding Colon Cancer, due to its insidious beginning. Furthermore, it is necessary to further reduce underreporting in order to enable even more accurate analysis, and provide more treatment information, considering that many cases did not have this statistic.

Keywords: Colonic neoplasm; time-to-treatment; northern region.