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# The Effect of Cancer on the Labor Supply of Employed Men over the Age of 65

David Candon <sup>\*†‡</sup>

## Abstract

This paper investigates the relationship between cancer diagnosis and the labor supply of employed men over the age of 65. While almost 60% of male cancers are diagnosed in men over the age of 65, no previous research has examined the effect that cancer has on this age group, which is surprising given the relevance of this group to public policy. With data from the Health and Retirement Study, I show that cancer has a significant negative effect on the labor supply of these workers. Using a combination of linear regression models and propensity score matching, I find that respondents who are diagnosed with cancer work 3 fewer hours per week than their non-cancer counterparts. They are also 10 percentage points more likely to stop working. This reduction seems to be driven by a deterioration in physical and mental health.

**JEL classification:** I10; J10; J22

**Keywords:** Cancer; Health shock, Employment; Labor supply

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\*A previous version of this paper was circulated under the title “The effect of cancer on the employment of older males: Attenuating selection bias using a high risk sample”.

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