The Impact of the Affordable Care Act on Breast Cancer Care in the USA - A Multi-Institutional Analysis

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BACKGROUND

Insurance status has a demonstrable effect on breast cancer care and outcomes.1 Uninsured patients are more likely to present with late stage disease and have poor outcomes.2,4 The Affordable Care Act (ACA) was signed into law in 2010,6,8 As of February 2016, an estimated 20 million adults, including 9.5 million adult females, gained health insurance coverage under the ACA.7 To date, there is little data available on the effect of the ACA on breast cancer care beyond the screening level. This study examined this effect across all levels of breast cancer care: prevention, treatment, and surveillance.

METHODS

Design: Retrospective chart and database review


Subjects: Female breast cancer patients aged 19 and older at institutions participating in the Integrated Repository for Cancer Research (iCare2) Breast Cancer Collaborative Registry (BCCR). Sites with less than 20 breast cancer cases per year were not included in this study. A total of 26 eligible sites were identified and 13 sites across 9 states enrolled in the study.

BCCR: The Breast Cancer Collaborative Registry is a multi-institutional protocol encompassing 70 sites across the USA.

Analysis: Fischer’s exact test and t-tests were used for statistical analysis to compare breast cancer care patient characteristics, access and utilization 5 years pre- and post-ACA.

RESULTS

Post-ACA patients were more likely to reside in urban areas, and more likely to be insured through Medicaid than pre-ACA patients. A trend towards increased number of non-Caucasian patient was seen.

Post-ACA patients were more likely to receive mastectomy than pre-ACA patients. They were more likely to receive MRI or US. No difference in screening mammogram use was seen.

Post-ACA patients were less likely to undergo radiation than pre-ACA patients.

CONCLUSION

These results suggest that the ACA may have had a positive effect on breast cancer care. However, more time may be needed to reflect its true impact. This serves to reinforce the importance of affordable insurance coverage for all breast cancer patients.

References


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