

The Impact of Obesity on Cancer Care: An Expanding Challenge

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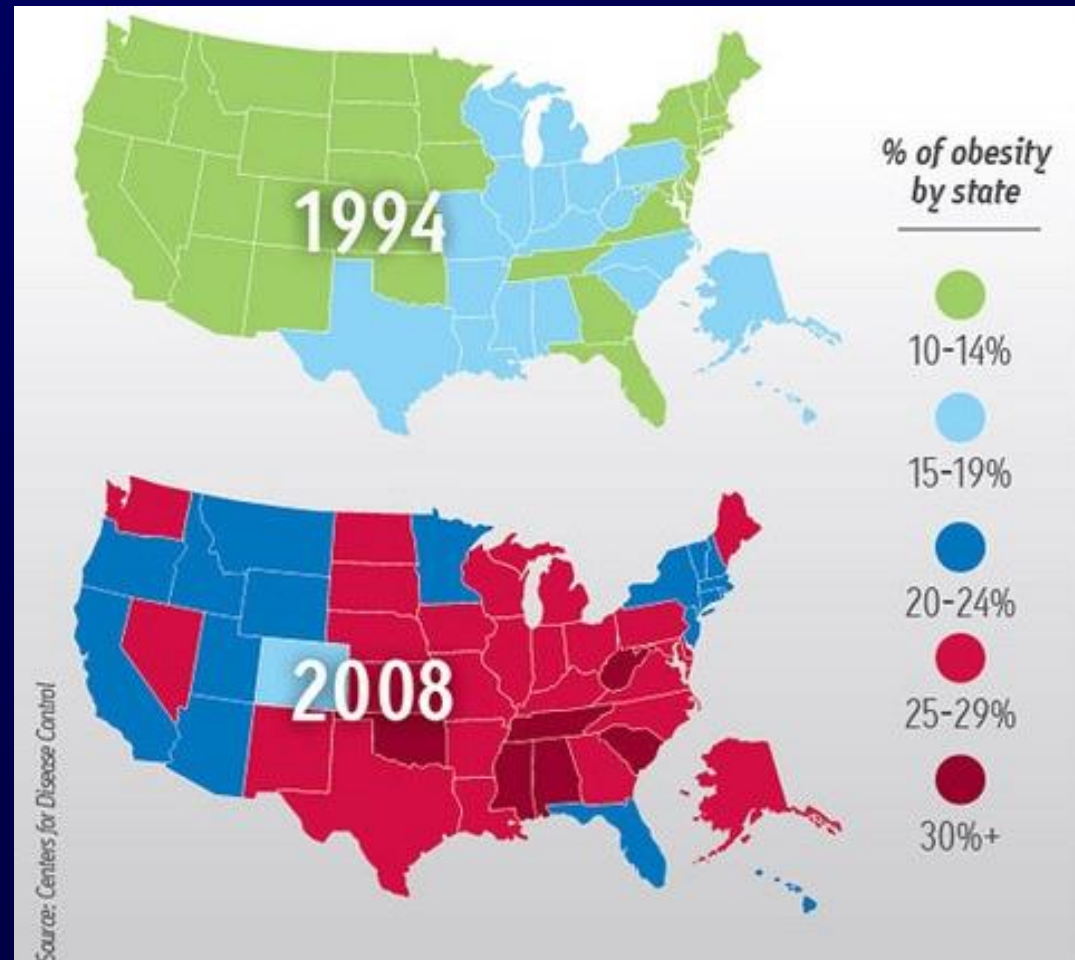


Overview

- Background
 - The magnitude of the obesity and cancer problem in Wisconsin
- Obesity in Cancer Care
 - How obesity affects everyday management of breast cancer patients
 - Treatments given and side effects
 - Effectiveness of treatment and likelihood of recurrence

The Obesity Epidemic in Wisconsin

- In 2012, 28% of Wisconsin adults were obese
- Nearly 63% of Wisconsin adults were overweight (BMI > 25)



Breast Cancer

- The most common cancer in women and second leading cause of death
 - In the U.S.
 - Over 200,000 women diagnosed in 2011
 - Over 40,000 deaths
 - In Wisconsin
 - Over 4,000 new cases of breast cancer yearly
 - Nearly 750 deaths annually

Breast Cancer Treatments

- Many treatments often used
 - Surgery
 - Chemotherapy
 - Anti-endocrine therapy
 - Radiation
- Obesity can affect cancer treatment choices and side effects

Breast Cancer Surgery

- Greater rates of complications in obese patients
 - Higher risk of wound infections
 - Increased arm swelling (lymphedema)
 - Two to three times higher overall complication rate

Chemotherapy and Anti-Endocrine Treatment

- Some studies show reduced doses may be given, likely due to side effects
- Fatigue can be increased
- Patients with higher body mass index have worse outcomes
- Hormone levels may be higher due to fat tissue

Breast Radiation Treatment

- Side effects from radiation increased in obese patients
 - The breast appearance may be altered
 - Increased risk to surrounding organs
 - More variation in radiation dose given
 - May need to change treatment delivery to lessen side effects

Obesity and Chemotherapy and Anti-Endocrine Treatment

- Breast radiation is typically given with the patient lying on her back
- At the sites of skin folds, increased skin side effects from radiation can occur
- Overweight patients can have increased side effects due to increased areas of skin folds

Positioning for Prone Radiation in Larger Patients

- Alternative treatment method for obese patients to improve radiation side effects – prone positioning
 - The patient lies face-down, allowing the treated breast to fall through an opening
 - This minimizes skin folds in obese patients, decreasing skin side effects

Prone Positioning for Breast Radiation

- This positioning can also decrease radiation doses to the heart and lungs
- It can be difficult for some patients to sustain this position throughout treatment
- This method is not available in all centers

Obesity in Cancer Patients – After Treatment

- Overweight and obese breast cancer patients have increased risk of cancer recurrence and lower overall survival
- Diet and exercise may improve outcomes and decrease development of other medical problems

Obesity in Daily Cancer Practice

- Overweight patients are counseled on improving diet and activity level during and after cancer treatment
 - Our institution created a 0.2 mile route in our Cancer Center for use year-round
 - We offer free nutritional services in our Cancer Center during and after treatment
 - At provider visits, encourage small initial changes, i.e. walking daily, swimming, other activities and healthier food choices

Obesity in the Larger Cancer Context

- The challenges created due to obesity in cancer are not unique to breast cancer
 - In prostate cancer (the most common cancer in men), the treatments, responses, and side effects are also influenced by obesity
 - Improved diet and exercise may decrease chance of developing a second new cancer

Conclusions

- Obesity in cancer patients creates challenges in optimizing treatment and minimizing side effects
- Obesity can increase the risk of cancer recurrence
- Policies that promote healthy lifestyles have the potential to decrease cancer rates, lessen treatment side effects, and improve survival after diagnosis

Thank You

Questions?