Disparities in Surgical Treatment of Early-Stage Breast Cancer Among Female Residents of Texas: The Role of Racial Residential Segregation

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Abstract
In this study of female residents of Texas diagnosed with in situ or localized breast cancer between 1995 and 2012, increasing racial residential segregation was associated with a decreased likelihood of being treated with mastectomy or breast-conserving surgery plus radiotherapy. Racial residential segregation also moderated racial disparities in surgical treatment.

Introduction: Early-stage breast cancer can be surgically treated using mastectomy or breast-conserving surgery and adjuvant radiotherapy, also known as breast-conserving therapy (BCT). Little is known about the association between racial residential segregation, year of diagnosis, and surgical treatment of early-stage breast cancer, and whether racial residential segregation influences the association between other demographic characteristics and disparities in surgical treatment. Methods: This was a retrospective study using data from the Texas Cancer Registry composed of individuals diagnosed with breast cancer between 1995 and 2012. The dependent variable was treatment using mastectomy or BCT (M/BCT) and the independent variables of interest (IVs) were racial residential segregation and year of diagnosis. The covariates were race, residence, ethnicity, tumor grade, census tract (CT) poverty level, age at diagnosis, stage at diagnosis, and year of diagnosis. Bivariate and multivariable multilevel logistic regression models were estimated. The final sample size was 69,824 individuals nested within 4335 CTs. Results: Adjusting for the IVs and all covariates, there were significantly decreased odds of treatment using M/BCT, as racial residential segregation increased from 0 to 1 (odds ratio [OR] 0.47; 95% confidence interval [CI], 0.41-0.54). There was also an increased likelihood of treatment using M/BCT with increasing year of diagnosis (OR 1.14; 95% CI, 1.13-1.16). A positive interaction effect between racial residential segregation and race was observed (OR 0.56; 95% CI, 0.36-0.88). Conclusion: Residents of areas with high indices of racial residential segregation were less likely to be treated with M/BCT. Racial disparities in treatment using M/BCT increased with increasing racial residential segregation.

Clinical Breast Cancer, Vol. - No. - © 2016 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Breast cancer, Breast conserving treatment, Disparities, Racial residential segregation, Surgical treatment
Racial Residential Segregation and Breast Cancer Treatment

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Our model specification was based on a modified version of the access to cancer care conceptual framework (Figure 1) and past literature.10,12,17,24 Our framework identifies 2 sets of variables that would influence early-stage breast cancer treatment: (1) patient characteristics (race, ethnicity, age, and tumor grade) and (2) the individual context (rural/urban residence, census tract poverty estimates, year of diagnosis, and racial residential segregation). We expect that these variables will be associated with receipt of M/BCT.

A previous literature has reported that racial residential segregation is associated with decreased likelihood of receiving adequate treatment for breast cancer15 and increased breast cancer mortality.18 There also has been an increase in breast cancer awareness and advocacy over the years; thus, it is important to identify whether this increased awareness and advocacy also has resulted in increased access to treatment, as well as the impact on associated disparities. Identifying changes over the years as well as variations across different demographic groups could guide policies and strategies aimed at reducing breast cancer treatment disparities. We hypothesized that increasing racial residential segregation is associated with decreased likelihood of receiving M/BCT, and there is an increased likelihood of receipt of M/BCT with increasing year of diagnosis (ie, passage of time).

In line with past literature10-14 and our conceptual model, we also hypothesized that African Americans, rural and urban nonmetropolitan residents, and residents of middle and high-poverty CTs have a decreased likelihood of being treated using M/BCT compared with their counterparts.

Racial residential segregation has been previously reported to influence racial disparities in breast cancer treatment among Medicare patients.15 In line with this finding, we hypothesized that with increasing racial residential segregation, there is a widening of disparities associated with race; we also hypothesized that the disparities are widened for the other geographical level variables (poverty level and rural-urban residence). Finally, we hypothesized that the gap in disparities is reduced with increasing year of diagnosis.

Material and Methods

Study Population

The Texas Cancer Registry was used for this study. The study sample consisted of all women ages 18 and older diagnosed with...
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