

Title: Cancer and Cognitive Difficulties in Older Appalachians

Author: Julia Guo

Support Team: Moyosoreoluwa Jacobs, & Dr. Bernard Schreurs

Purpose: Cancer treatments have been linked to cognitive decline (Vearncombe et. al 2009). Cognitive domains commonly affected by cancer include attention, memory, and executive functioning (Pendergrass et. al 2018).

Methods: We used the 2018 BRFSS data to examine the association of cancer on cognitive difficulties in older West Virginians versus their counterparts in other states.

Results: There was no significant association between cancer and cognitive difficulties in WV, $\chi^2(1, N = 1798) = 0.09, p = 0.66$. However, there was a significant association between cancer and cognitive difficulties in the US, $\chi^2(1, N = 143450) = 6.15, p = 0.01$.

Discussion/Conclusions: Although there is a significant association between cancer and cognitive difficulties in the US, there was no significant association between the two in West Virginia. Since data was retrieved from 2018, further data must be collected to examine present-day associations.