

Title: An Uphill Battle in Appalachia: Cancer and Depression in West Virginia

Author: L. Morgan Cole

Background/Purpose: In the United States, cancer is the second most common cause of death (CDC, 2020), but it also is associated with depression and other challenges (Hotopf, 2002). In West Virginia, although cancer screening is widespread, depression is also high (Muntaner & Barnett, 2000).

Methods: Using the 2020 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Web-Enabled Analysis Tool (WEAT) app was used to conduct a logistic regression examining the relation of cancer and depression among 5840 adults.

Results: The overall model was significant, χ^2 (DF = 5, N = 5840) = 948.15, $p < 0.01$. Individuals who ever had cancer were 2.1 times more likely to have also had depression. Although age was significant, individuals aged 65+ were only 51% as likely to have depression than those ages 45-64 years.

Conclusions: Depression among middle-aged adults with cancer is high. With cancer being so widespread, early detection of depression may be an important value-added screen for cancer patients.