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Abstract C40: Employment participation after early-stage breast cancer: Patterns and determinants

Christine C. Ekenga; Maria Perez; Julie A. Margenthaler; Donna B. Jeffe

[— Author & Article Information](#)

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Abstract

Background: Employment is a social determinant of health. However, few longitudinal studies have examined employment outcomes in women with early-stage breast cancer. The purpose of this study was to examine employment trajectories in a cohort of early-stage breast cancer patients from treatment to 2-year follow-up, and evaluate relationships between sociodemographic, clinical/treatment, and psychosocial factors and employment outcomes.

Methods: Data from a cohort study of newly diagnosed early-stage breast cancer patients were used to examine employment outcomes among 347 working-age patients, 40-64 years old. We examined patients' employment trajectories after definitive surgical treatment, using a multivariable logistic regression model to identify factors associated with diminished (versus sustained) employment at 2-year follow-up.

Results: A total of 245 patients (71%) were employed at least part-time at the time of definitive surgical treatment. 50 patients (20%) reported diminished employment over the 2-year follow-up period. After adjusting for covariates (age, marital status, education, household income, insurance status, depression history, social support, comorbidity, and surgery alone or surgery with chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or both), we observed that fatigue, assessed as SF-36 vitality subscale score below the median (OR=5.50, 95%CI=2.41, 12.56), and African-American race (versus white race, OR=4.23, 95%CI=1.66, 10.76) were associated with diminished employment.

Conclusions: Patients with elevated fatigue and African Americans patients were more likely to experience diminished employment participation after definitive surgical treatment. Further research is warranted to identify factors associated with these disparities and strategies to improve workforce participation after breast cancer.

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