The Impact of Modifiable Lifestyle Factors on the Prognosis of Breast Cancer Survivors

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Modifiable lifestyle factors have been described to be of significant impact on the prognosis of breast cancer patients. Maintaining a normal body mass index and increasing physical activity has been confirmed to have favorable impact on prognosis in multiple trials, and nutrition experts recommend the adherence to general nutrition guidelines, which take into account the complexity of dietary values. Also smoking and drinking habits may have an influence on prognosis and risk of recurrence: In a recent cohort analysis Li et al. [1] utilized a population-based nested case-control study design, which enrolled 365 patients diagnosed with an estrogen receptor-positive (ER+) first primary invasive breast cancer and a second primary contralateral invasive breast cancer, and 726 matched controls diagnosed with only an ER+ first primary invasive breast cancer. Obesity, alcohol use, and smoking data were taken from medical record reviews and participant interviews. Using conditional logistic regression, they evaluated associations between these three exposures and the risk for second primary contralateral breast cancer. Obesity, consumption of 7 or more alcoholic beverages per week, and current smoking were all positively related to risk of contralateral breast cancer (odds ratio (OR), 1.4; 95% CI, 1.0 to 2.1; OR, 1.9; 95% CI, 1.1 to 3.2; and OR, 2.2; 95% CI, 1.2 to 4.0, respectively). Compared with women who consumed fewer than 7 alcoholic beverages per week and who were never or former smokers, women who consumed 7 or more drinks per week and were current smokers had a 7.2-fold (95% CI, 1.9 to 26.5) elevated risk of contralateral breast cancer. This study

adds to the already available literature and suggests that obesity, smoking, and alcohol consumption influence contralateral breast cancer and recurrence risk.

In Germany, the SUCCESS C trial [2], prospectively randomizing patients to either intensive lifestyle counseling or minimal counseling with a target number of more than 3,500 patients will not only be the largest trial on this topic worldwide, but will also provide valuable prospective data on the relevance of lifestyle for breast cancer survivors. Once again, Germany proves to be the home of innovative and practice changing medical research.

This issue of BREAST CARE will focus on different aspects of modifiable lifestyle factors from different experts' perspectives [2–5]. In summary, it is quite obvious that changing patients' lifestyle might influence the prognosis in some patients in a magnitude comparable to systemic treatment. On the other hand, there may be patients who find it much harder to change habits and personal lifestyle than to tolerate the adverse effects of systemic treatment. This issue of BREAST CARE may contribute to our awareness of the influence of lifestyle factors on the course of disease and help us to accept the challenge of discussing these aspects with our patients and offer them our counseling. It would be well worth it!

*'Curious things, habits. People themselves
never knew they had them.'*
Agatha Christie

References

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