



ASO Author Reflections: Prediagnosis Weight Loss: Early Detection and Postoperative Prognosis Among Patients with Pancreatic Cancer

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PAST

Unintentional weight loss is commonly defined as a decrease in baseline body weight by $\geq 5\%$.¹ While unintentional weight loss has been previously associated with cancer,² it has not been validated as a potential method to improve cancer detection. Unfortunately, there are no validated early detection methods for pancreatic cancer, and 50% of patients present with metastatic disease. Past studies examining weight loss and pancreatic cancer are often limited by small sample sizes, use of subjective weight data, or extended time intervals between measurements.³

PRESENT

In the current study, we analyzed objective patient weight data from electronic health records in the year preceding a patient's diagnosis of pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma. Approximately 75% of patients experienced a $\geq 5\%$ decrease in body weight prior to diagnosis, and the median amount of weight lost was 14.2 lbs.⁴ Weight loss prior to diagnosis also occurred in early-stage disease, and only 0.3% of patients gained weight prior to diagnosis. Among patients with localized pancreatic cancer who

underwent pancreatectomy, greater prediagnosis weight loss was associated with poor overall survival, despite similar perioperative and pathologic outcomes.

FUTURE

Greater emphasis should be placed on detection and clinical evaluation of unintentional weight loss in the general population. Large-scale prospective weight tracking in asymptomatic patients, similar in design to a past trial by our group,⁵ may detect pancreatic and potentially other malignancies earlier.

DISCLOSURES The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest

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