



Impact of the Affordable Care Act on Head and Neck Cancer Patients

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Objectives:

Our primary objective is to assess the impact of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) on the proportion of uninsured head and neck cancer patients. Our secondary objectives is to assess the impact of the ACA on the rate of Medicaid-insured head and neck cancer patients. Previous data has shown that patients without insurance at the time of diagnosis of head and neck malignancy have a higher mortality rate (Figure 1).

Materials and Methods:

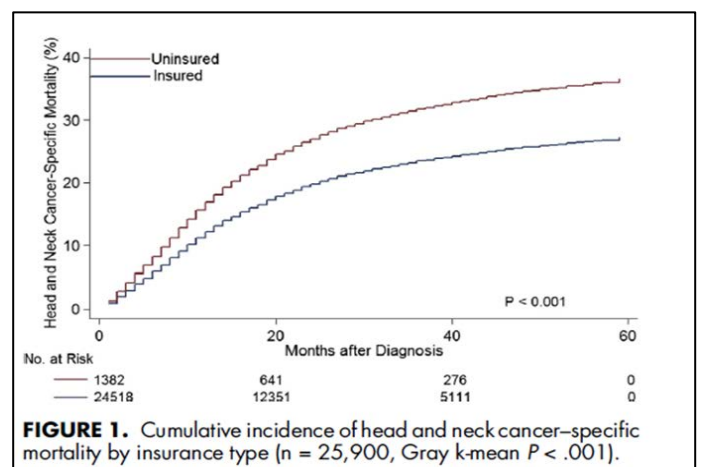
Data for 1188 head and neck cancer patients from the Cancer Registry Data at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital from 2010-2017 were collected. Using chi squared analysis, we compared the percentage of uninsured patients from both before and after the ACA was implemented. We also stratified the uninsured patients by the stage of head and neck malignancy. Finally, we compared the rate of Medicaid-insured patients before and after ACA implementation.

Results:

The uninsured proportion of head and neck patients dropped from 12.0% to 5.3% after implementation of the ACA ($p < 0.0001$). There was a 6.1% reduction in uninsured patients with Stage I disease and a 6.9% reduction in uninsured patients with Stage IV disease. The percentage of Medicaid-insured head and neck cancer patients increased from 5.6% to 9.7% ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions:

Our data suggests an associated between the implementation of the ACA and an expansion in coverage for head and cancer patients. Such expansion is likely to improve the overall outcomes, overall survival, and benefits in head and neck cancer patients.



Inverso, G., Mahal, B. A., Aizer, A. A., Donoff, R. B., & Chuang, S.-K. (2016). Health Insurance Affects Head and Neck Cancer Treatment Patterns and Outcomes. *Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery*, 74(6), 1241–1247. doi: 10.1016/j.joms.2015.12.023