Significant association between deaths from prostate cancer and heart disease in 50 US states and the District of Columbia

Steven Lehrer, MD
Sheryl Green, MBBCh

Department of Radiation Oncology
Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York

Correspondence to Dr. Steven Lehrer, Mount Sinai Medical Center Box 1236, New York 10029 or stevenlehrer@hotmail.com
phone 212 765 7132
fax 212 245 9708
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In a post hoc hypothesis-developing secondary analysis, Thomas et al found that coronary artery disease was associated with a 35% increased risk of prostate cancer diagnosis (1). Thomas et al suggest that if this association is confirmed in future studies, further analysis of this relationship and the potential biological mechanisms by which coronary artery disease mediates this augmentation in prostate cancer risk are warranted. We have analyzed the correlation of prostate cancer death rates in 50 US states and the District of Columbia with deaths from heart disease. Our analysis confirms the finding of Thomas et al.

Data on prostate cancer mortality are from Table 2.23.1.2M, Prostate. Age-Adjusted Cancer Death Rates and 95% Confidence Intervals by U.S. Census Region and Division, State, and Race and Ethnicity, United States, United States Cancer Statistics (USCS) 2007, Cancer Types Grouped by State and Region (http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/uscs/cancersbystateandregion.aspx). Data on age adjusted deaths from heart disease are from Table 29: Deaths: Final Data for 2006. National Vital Statistics Reports (2). Data on race distribution by state is from the US Census, 2010 (http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data/).

There was a significant correlation between prostate cancer mortality and heart disease mortality (r = 0.314, p = 0.027). Because the incidence of prostate cancer is lower in whites than blacks (3), multivariate linear regression was performed with prostate cancer mortality as the dependent variable, heart disease mortality and percent white population by state as independent variables. The correlation between prostate cancer mortality and heart disease mortality was significant (p = 0.038), controlling for the effect of race (p = 0.811).
Hypothetically there are common causes of coronary artery disease and prostate cancer, and the 50 US States and District of Columbia differ in the extent of the common causes. If these common causes can be substantiated, measures known to reduce coronary artery disease might also reduce prostate cancer risk.

Reference List


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