

# Cancer patients with obesity show poorer psychosocial health

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(HealthDay)—Patients with breast or prostate cancer who are obese

score higher in psychosocial problem-related distress than nonobese patients, according to a study recently published in *Psycho-Oncology*.

Errol J. Philip, M.D., Ph.D., of the University of California in San Francisco, and colleagues gathered data from 4,159 patients who received care at a comprehensive cancer center in California between 2009 and 2017. Patients were 55 years or older and had postmenopausal [breast cancer](#) (52.2 percent), prostate cancer (38.7 percent), or [colon cancer](#) (9.1 percent). Before starting their [cancer treatment](#), patients completed questionnaires asking them about physical, practical, functional, emotional, and other problems they may have been experiencing.

The researchers found that, overall, patients with breast cancer had the highest prevalence of biopsychosocial problem-related distress (mean = 4.3), followed by patients with colon cancer (mean = 3.8) and men with prostate cancer (mean = 2.8). Compared with nonobese patients, obese breast and [prostate cancer](#) patients experienced higher levels of problem-related distress. The investigators found that the opposite was true for colon cancer patients: Nonobese patients reported more distress-related problems (mean = 4.12) than obese patients.

"In addition to emphasizing the need for effective multidisciplinary weight-based interventions in oncology, the current study suggests that obese patients may represent a vulnerable patient population who are more at risk of experiencing symptoms such as pain and fatigue, as well as impairments in sleep and sexual functioning," the authors write. "If indeed this is the case, additional measures may be necessary to ensure patients managing both cancer and obesity do not needlessly suffer."

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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