

Early Effect of Mastectomy on the Health- Related Quality of Life of Breast Cancer Patients

Mahnaz Tabassum Prova

Background:

Worldwide, breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer among women. Substantial advances in its diagnosis and management has led to increasing number of survivors who face changes in their quality of life from the point of diagnosis through its treatment even at the post-treatment phase. So the patterns of changes in quality of life along with the contributing factors are of growing research interest. The aim of this research is to assess the early effect of mastectomy on health related quality of life (HRQOL) of breast cancer patients.

Methodology:

This prospective study was conducted in the Department of Surgical Oncology, National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital, Dhaka, Bangladesh from July 2017 – March, 2019. 102 patients who fulfilled the inclusion and exclusion criteria were included in this study by purposive sampling. Data regarding demographic & clinical profile were collected through semi – structured data collection sheet which also included closed type structured questionnaire EORTC (European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer) QLQ-C30 and BR23 after being registered and approved by the authority to use the Bangla Questionnaire supplied by EORTC.

Results:

Mean age of the patient was 45.72 (± 11.06) years. The physical functional well-being of women showed statistically significant deterioration ($p=0.001$) after surgery mainly in young, illiterate patients with low income and no partner. On the other hand, there were not any statistically significant (0.08, 0.08, 0.11 and 0.09) change in role, emotional, cognitive and social functioning. Global health status/ QOL scores showed statistically significant reduction ($p=0.02$) at the post-mastectomy phase. After mastectomy, the patients showed significant reduction in body image score ($p=0.02$) and increase in breast symptoms ($p=0.001$). But the most striking effect of mastectomy was increase in arm symptoms from mean score of 22.88 to 55.70. Neo- adjuvant chemotherapy had significant (0.03, 0.02, 0.01) effect on all breast specific scales and physical functioning & global health status scores (0.006 & 0.04).

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Conclusion:

Significant changes in physical functioning, global health status and breast specific scales have been observed shortly after mastectomy especially in patients who also received neoadjuvant chemotherapy. Creating awareness regarding these post-operative changes would help the patients & her family to cope better to the situation. This would eventually yield better overall outcome and compliance to further management like reconstructive surgeries. Moreover, as this study suggests that mastectomy not only affects cosmesis but also brings significant early changes to HRQOL, these data would help us to motivate more appropriate candidates for breast conserving surgery.

Key words : Mastectomy, Health- Related Quality of Life, Breast cancer.