CONTRIBUTING FACTORS OF DELAYED PRESENTATION IN BREAST CANCER: A 3 YEARS RETROSPECTIVE STUDY OF SINGLE INSTITUTIONAL NON-TERTIARY CENTRE

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Abstract
Breast cancer is the most common cancer among Malaysian women. In view of the significant contribution of delayed presentation to the disease burden in Malaysia, we reviewed the incidence of late presentation of breast cancer and the contributing factors in Hospital Sultan Abdul Halim, one of the non-tertiary center in Kedah, Malaysia. Disease presentation was analysed using data from 2018 to 2020, new cases of breast cancer presenting to the SOPD Hospital Sultan Abdul Halim, Kedah were reviewed; the race, age and stage at presentation were analysed. Available literature from Malaysia regarding factors contributing to delayed presentation was reviewed and presented here. Of 213 cases seen in Hospital Sultan Abdul Halim, most breast cancers presented with palpable lump and diagnosed by tissue biopsy. The prevalent age group was 40 to 49 years, and the median age was 50 years. The average size of the tumour was between 2cm to 5cm in diameter. Malay women appear to be predominant than other ethnic groups; 60% to 70% were in late stages (Stages 3 and 4). The delay in presentation of breast cancer was attributed to a poor knowledge, the negative perceptions of the disease, strong belief in traditional medicine, coupled with fear, and denial. A prospective, population-based study in this region is required to determine the pattern of the factors delaying presentation. These findings will have important implications in future programmes in order to promote the early detection of breast cancer, educational purpose as well as to increase awareness of breast cancer in the populations.