

**OP 07 The factors influencing the delayed presentation of symptomatic breast cancer among the patients referred to Cancer Treatment Unit, Teaching Hospital of Jaffna**

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**INTRODUCTION:** Breast cancer is the leading cancer among women in Sri Lanka. Delayed presentation is preventable and has major effects on patients' prognosis and survival.

**OBJECTIVES:** The objective of the study was to identify the magnitude of delayed presentation and its associated factors in women with breast cancer referred to Cancer Treatment Unit, Teaching Hospital of Jaffna.

**METHODS:** This was a cross sectional study which included 105 respondents with histology proven breast cancer, diagnosed between 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2011 to 30<sup>th</sup> May 2013. A structurally prepared interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Patient delay was defined as more than 3 months from the recognition of symptoms to consultation of a medical professional. Chi-squared was used for analysis.

**RESULTS:** The median time to consultation was 12 weeks and the median time to start treatment was 2 weeks. The frequency of diagnosis delay of more than 3 months was 54.3%. The knowledge about breast cancer was poor in 78.1%. The factors significantly associated with delayed presentation included individual income 0.01, tumour size at diagnosis (0.046), axillary nodal status (0.017), ?overall knowledge about breast cancer (0.002) especially knowledge about prognosis (0.017) and early diagnosis (0.028).

**CONCLUSION:** Delayed presentation is a serious problem in Northern province. Patient delay was influenced by complex interactions between many factors. Breast cancer awareness and education are required to promote early detection, diagnosis and treatment.