

Need of sentinel node biopsy in Jaffna for better surgical management of breast cancer patients

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Introduction

Breast cancer is the commonest cancer among Sri Lankan women and women world over. Sentinel node biopsy is becoming the standard of care in developed countries for management of axilla. In Sri Lanka also sentinel node biopsy is being practiced and showed positive. In Jaffna, all the operable breast carcinomas are undergoing mastectomy and axillary clearance irrespective of clinical and radiological evidence of axillary lymph node (LN) status.

Objectives

To assess the need of sentinel node biopsy in Jaffna for better axillary lymph node management

Method

This descriptive Study was carried out in Trail cancer hospital Tellippalai, and data obtained from records of all patients who were registered from April 2014 to April 2016. Data of patients underwent mastectomy and axillary clearance without neo-adjuvant chemotherapy were taken and analysed.

Results

Hundred and three patients were included in the study. In these patients, histologically axillary LN positive in 49 patients (47%) and negative in 54 patients (52.4%).

In ultrasonically suspicious LNs, 75% became histologically positive for metastasis and 25% became as normal. In ultrasonically normal or reactive LNs, 72.7 % became negative for malignant deposits.

Conclusion

More than half of the patients who undergone axillary LN dissection doesn't have histological evidence of LN metastasis. Ultrasound scanning of axilla is a simple non-invasive investigation, which has more value in excluding metastasis. There is need for sentinel node biopsy in Jaffna, as there were more histologically normal axillary LNs. So it's advisable to perform sentinel node biopsy at least in ultrasonically node negative patients.