Breast Cancer - its impact on national resource and survival

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ABSTRACT

Aim: To determine the prevalence of breast cancer in Malaysia and its cost effectiveness in advanced cases.

Materials and Methods: This was a retrospective review of data in public hospitals and available literature on the epidemiology of breast cancer in Malaysia.

Results: In Malaysia breast cancer is the 2nd most common case of carcinoma related admissions to hospital; 34 per 100,000 populations are affected and 3500 new cases diagnosed every year. Locally advanced cases were found in 44.1% in the first visit to hospital. Approximately RM 10 thousand is the cost of treatment in early stage disease whereas it will cost 2-3 times more in advanced disease (3500 cases X 20K = 70,000 i.e. RM 70 millions). It is a huge economic burden on the national health budget and wastage of precious time of clinician as well (another loss of human resource).

Conclusion: We want to convey the message to the health care personnel to take initiative for early detection of breast cancer and initiate appropriate treatment at the earliest to save the national resource as well to improve survival.

Keywords: Breast cancer, Malaysia, prevalence, national resources
Introduction

Prognosis of breast cancer mainly depends on the initial presenting stage. Early detection and treatment have a major impact on survival and can save effort and money involved in the treatment.

Aim and objective:-The aim of this study was to determine the prevalence of breast cancer in Malaysia and its cost effectiveness in advanced cases.

Materials and Methods

This was a retrospective review of data in public hospitals (Kuantan, Temeloh) and the available literature (pubmed search) on the epidemiology of breast cancer in Malaysia including National Cancer Registry Malaysia (2004).

Results

In Malaysia breast cancer is the commonest cancer among women and 2nd most common case of carcinoma related admissions to hospital; 34 per 100,000 populations are affected and 3500 new cases diagnosed every year. Locally advanced cases were found in 44.1% in the first visit to hospital. Approximately RM 10 thousand is the cost of treatment in early stage disease whereas it will cost 2-3 times more in advanced disease (3500 cases X 20K =70, 000,000 i.e.RM 70 millions ,if 40% advanced cases than 1400 X 20K=28,00,00000 ).It is a huge economic burden on the national health budget and wastage of precious time of clinician as well to fight with more complex treatment of advance disease state. (another loss of human resource)

Discussion

Breast Cancer is the second leading cause of cancer related death among women (40-50 yrs) worldwide and considered as one of the major cause of health concern. Worldwide every 3 minutes1 case is diagnosed and every 11 minutes 1 patient die of breast Cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, about 1.3 million women will be diagnosed with breast cancer annually worldwide about 465,000 will die from the disease. (1)

USA has the height incidence (101.1) China lowest (18.7).In yr2000 over 10millions cases were diagnosed with 373000 death worldwide (95/100000 in developed countries & 20/100000 – developing countries) (2)
In Malaysia carcinoma breast is the commonest cancer in women over 20 years of age. The highest incidence of breast cancer seen in the age group of 50-59yrs. (2,3) it is the overall second most common cause of cancer related admission to the hospital and fourth common cause of Cancer related death. (2)

“Globocan” in 2000 reported 3825 new cases with 1707 deaths; crude death rate of 34.9/100000 population In western world, commonest age group affected is 6th decade where as in eastern world it is 5th decade including Malaysia(50-59 yrs). In the eastern world younger age group is mostly affected and the disease is more aggressive in nature. In USA, 1 in 8 women and in Malaysia, 1 in 20 women is at risk of developing Carcinoma breast in life time. (2,4) In Malaysia average ASR is 46.2/100000 ; Chinese 59.7, Indian 55.8 & Malay 33.9 (national Cancer registry 2003-04) (2,4) Though it is a common disease of the western world, Incidence is sharply rising in developing countries due to urbanization and changing of life style. In Malaysia there is 6 fold increases the incidence since 1993-2003(registry in UM hospital) In between 2003-2005, total 67,792 cases were diagnosed.

In developed countries most of the cases are detected in early stage which carries better prognosis and increases the incidences of breast conservation surgery (BCS) as well and reduces the cost of treatment. Locally advanced breast cancer (LABC) in developing country is 40-50% in comparison to 10-25%cases in developed country . (5) In Malaysia 44.1% cases presented in stage II 70-75% cases in stage II or III. (2)

Prognosis of stage I disease can be as good as 90%, while in stage III it falls down to 40-50%. (6,7) Almost all cases of stage I can effectively treated with BCS and the patient compliance is very good due to avoidance of Mastectomy .Treatment cost and the effort involved in advanced stage disease is significantly higher than early stage disease due to its complex treatment modules.

Study limitations

The data collection was not done from all the hospitals in Malaysia due to logistic problems.

Conclusion

Breast cancer diagnoses in advance staged significantly lowers the survival, reduces incidence of BCS and increases the treatment cost to a greater extent. It is the moral responsibility of all health personal to encourage common population to initiate early diagnoses and treatment.
References


