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Factors influencing delayed presentation of breast cancer at a tertiary care hospital in Pakistan

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Breast cancer is the leading cause of death despite the continuous development of newer and more effective cancer treatment modalities. In Asia, Pakistan has the highest rate of breast cancer. Delay in diagnosis and non-availability of treatment are the major factors responsible for advanced stage and low survival. Breast cancer treatment shows better prognosis when it is diagnosed at an early stage but mortality increases significantly with delayed diagnosis and advanced stage of disease. The objective of our study was to identify the factors responsible for delayed presentation of patients with breast carcinoma. A cross-sectional study using a questionnaire method was conducted at the Foundation University Medical College affiliated with Fauji Foundation hospital Rawalpindi from January 2015 to December 2016. A total of 89 patients gave consent and were interviewed using a pre-structured questionnaire during the study. Age ranged from 25 years to 64 years. Majority of patients were in stage T3N1M0 (31.5%). Second most common stage was T4N0M0 (14.6%). 13 patients (12.4%) were in stage T3N0M0 and 10 patients (11.2%) were in T3N2M0. Delay ranged from 3 months to more than one year, 43.8% presented with delay of 3 to 6 months. The reasons for delay were lack of knowledge about breast cancer (41%), lack of availability of health care services (32.6%), purdah and religious reasons (6.7%) and fear of being diagnosed with cancer (10.1%). The main reasons for delay identified in our study were lack of knowledge and availability of appropriate health care facilities. In order to improve outcome of breast cancer more focus is needed on spreading awareness and improving health care services in rural areas.

Biography

Humera Naz Altaf has done her postgraduate training in General surgery at Holyfamily hospital. In January 2012 she joined Shifa College of Medicine as Senior Registrar and was promoted to post of Assistant Professor in 2014.

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