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Seroma formation after breast cancer surgery: incidence and risk factors

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Abstract:

Background: Seroma formation, or the subcutaneous collection of fluid, is a common problem after surgery for the breast cancer. It may lead to wound-related complications and also can delay adjuvant therapy. The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of various clinical and therapeutic variables on seroma formation.

Methods: A prospective cross sectional study of patients who underwent surgical therapy for breast cancer was carried out. Modified radical mastectomy was performed on 67 patients (65%) and 28 patients (27.2%) underwent breast conservative surgery. Simple extended mastectomy was done for the remaining 8 patients (7.8%). Seroma formation was studied in relation to age, type of surgery, tumor size, nodal involvement, preoperative chemotherapy, surgical instrument (electrocautery or scalpel), use of pressure garment, and duration of drainage. All of the patients followed for 4 weeks after surgery.

Results: A total of 103 patients with breast cancer were studied. The mean age of the patients was 48.3 years (25-82). Seroma occurred in 27 (26.2%) patients. There was statistically significant relation between age and seroma formation after breast cancer surgery ($p=0.005$), while other factors studied was found to be significantly ineffective. In addition, there was not any relation between seroma formation and drain duration. However, two factors including type of the operation and level of lymphatic dissection was considerable with confidence interval up to 90%, but it was not statistically significant with confidence interval $>95\%$ ($p=0.068$ and 0.063 respectively).

Conclusion: These findings suggest that the age is a predicting factor for seroma formation in breast cancer patients, while other factors do not significantly affect that.

Keywords:

Seroma , breast cancer surgery , axillary dissection

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