Tittle: Study on the delays in the process of care of patients with breast cancer: from the suspected diagnosis until the end of treatment

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Abstract

The delay in access to an effective treatment in breast cancer has proved to negatively reduce the patient´s survival and has been associated to advanced stages at the diagnosis and to the need for more agressive and costly treatments.

Methods: Retrospective descriptive study combining quantitative and qualitative techniques which estimated the time used in each of the stages of the health care process among women diagnosed and/ or who started their treatment of breast cancer in 2012 at two hospitals of the province of Santa Fe, Argentina.

Results: 62 patients were included in the sample. 20.3% received her diagnosis within 30 days of the mammogram and / or ultrasound alone and half were operated within one month of the diagnosis. There were delays occurred at the start of treatment after surgery. 60% of patients who had to make adjuvant chemotherapy and 72.4% with radiotherapy after surgery had delays more than 60 days. None of the patients with stage IV began treatment before 30 days.

Conclusions: Compared to the National Breast Cancer Guidelines, the study results show delays at all stages of the health care process. These data highlight the need to develop strategies to reduce the period of time to confirm the diagnosis in women with suspected breast cancer and in the access to treatment in patients with cancer confirmed.

Keywords: Breast cancer, Navigation, Delays