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The influence of preventive microsurgical lymph node transplantation and lympho-venous anastomose(s) on the incidence and prognosis of breast cancer related lymphedema in high-risk breast cancer survivors

Nele Adriaenssens

The Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Abstract

The main aim of this project, that started in January 2013, is to study the influence of preventive microsurgical lymph node transplantation (LNT) and/or lympho-venous anastomose(s) (LVA) on the incidence and prognosis of breast cancer related lymphedema (BCRL) in high-risk breast cancer survivors. The project is built-up by three sections to come to this endpoint.

The first section, section A, is a prospective study that focuses on the effects of the microsurgical BCRL treatments (LNT and LVA), in combination with standard complex physical therapy, in breast cancer survivors with BCRL.

In the second section, section B, breast cancer survivors with high risk for onset and development of BCRL are determined. Potential patient related risk factors, previously never included in clinical trials in relation to BCRL, are studied. In the analytical models, known treatment- and patient related risk factors are taken into account as well. The first potential risk factor is the autonomic nervous system and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis. The second potential risk factor is anatomic variants of the lymphatic system. In section B, retrospective designs, prospective designs and animal models are used to determine potential risk factors. The influences of risk factors in response to BCRL treatments are also analyzed (in section C).

The last section, section C, is a randomized clinical trial, studying the main aim of the project, as discussed in the first paragraph.