Radiological Staging in Early Breast cancer – Are we over servicing

Dr Yegi Sandy Kim, Dr Kaleb Lourensz , Mr Tristan Leech

Purpose: Breast cancer is second most prevalent cancer in Australia and the most commonly diagnosed cancer in females. Currently there are no Australian guidelines in radiological staging for early breast cancer. There are international guidelines which opposes of providing radiological staging for early breast cancer given low prevalence of metastatic disease.
The purpose of this study is to investigate the value of systemic radiological staging in patients diagnosed with early breast cancer for the first time. **Method:** Patients treated for their early stage breast cancer between January 2015 and December 2017 were included. These patients were identified from Multidisciplinary meeting lists. The electronic medical records were reviewed to obtain data on tumour characteristics and results of initial staging studies (nuclear medicine bone scan and/or computed tomography). **Results:** A total of 387 were identified and 187 patients were included in the study, all of whom underwent at least one staging investigation. There were 3 patients (1.6%) with metastatic disease all of whom had stage II disease. 12% of the patients were required further imaging or biopsy after initial radiological staging for lesions which were ultimately proven to be benign. **Conclusion:** There was a low prevalence of distant metastatic disease in this study cohort. This supports other studies and international guidelines which advocate that systemic staging is not routinely required in patients with newly diagnosed early breast cancer, who are asymptomatic of metastatic disease at time of diagnosis.

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