

Understanding Early Breast Cancer in the Indian Subcontinent Women

Satish Kumar Sahu*

Department of Oncology, Cancer Hospital, Kolkata, India

Commentary

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***For Correspondence:** Satish Kumar Sahu, Department of Oncology, Cancer Hospital, Kolkata, India

Email:satishsahu456@gmail.com

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DESCRIPTION

This study focuses on female breast cancer. It is written not only for women who have been diagnosed with early breast cancer, but also for those who are undergoing breast cancer screenings.

Metastatic breast cancer refers to breast cancer that has spread to other regions of the body. We have a separate brochure that discusses metastatic breast cancer. Men are rarely diagnosed with breast cancer. A supplementary information brochure titled "Understanding Breast Cancer in Men" discusses early and advanced breast cancer in males.

How prevalent is breast cancer in India? Breast cancer is the second most frequent cancer in Indian subcontinent women, after cervical cancer. Though breast cancer is more common in women, it can develop in men as well, albeit with considerably less frequency. Breast cancer incidence (newly diagnosed instances of cancer per year) is approximately 8-9 women per 100,000 healthy women in India, and 100 women per 100,000 healthy women in the United States. Between 2001 and 2003, 202 cases of breast cancer were registered (0.46% of all cancers) for males across all age groups in India, while 11,502 cases of breast cancer were registered (25.9% of all cancers) for females across all age groups in five urban centres Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Bhopal, and Bangalore and one rural centre Barshi. In 2016, 4410 instances of breast cancer were documented at the Tata Memorial Hospital (T.M.H) I in Mumbai, India, with 2203 patients undergoing surgery (all procedures included). Adjuvant chemotherapy was given to 1931 patients, and palliative chemotherapy was given to 1344. The total number of patients treated with RT was 1412. Cancer begins in our bodies' cells. Cells are the small building components that make up our bodies' organs and tissues. They divide in a controlled manner to produce new cells. This is how our bodies develop, heal, and repair themselves.

The body sends signals to cells directing them when to divide and develop and when to cease growing. When a cell is no longer required or cannot be fixed, it receives a signal to cease functioning and die. Cancer occurs when the regular functioning of a cell fails and the cell becomes aberrant. The defective cell continues to divide, producing an increasing number of abnormal cells. These eventually combine to form a lump (tumour). Not every bump is malignant.

By extracting a small sample of tissue or cells from a bump, doctors can determine whether it is malignant. This is known as a biopsy. The physicians use a microscope to look for cancer cells in the sample. A benign (non-cancerous) lump can grow but cannot spread to other parts of the body. It normally causes issues only when it puts pressure on surrounding organs.

A cancerous (malignant) mass can spread to surrounding tissue. Cancer cells can spread from the site of origin (the main site) to other parts of the body. They can move through the bloodstream or the lymphatic system. When the cells reach another part of the body, they may begin to multiply and form a new tumour. This is referred to as secondary cancer or metastasis.