

A study of selected risk factors in Sri Lankan breast cancers

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Breast cancer (BC) is the most common cancer among Sri Lankan females. Being null parous, use of oral contraceptives, lack of breast feeding and a family history of BC are some of the risk factors believed to be associated with increasing BC incidence. The present study attempted to observe the effects of above risk factors in the development of BC. Data on civil status, parity, duration of breast feeding, usage of oral contraceptives, family history and knowledge on self assessment of BC was gathered from newly diagnosed consented BC patients (n=100) using an interviewer administered questionnaire (Ethical approval-651/32). Among the BC patients majority (63%) were postmenopausal and 37% were premenopausal. Majority of the participants were married (99% of premenopausal and 96% of postmenopausal) and have given birth to at least one child (99% and 97% of pre and postmenopausal) and 38% have given birth to more than 3 children. Among all, majority (82%) has breast fed for more than one year. Twenty of premenopausal (54%) and fourteen of postmenopausal (22%) have used oral contraceptives and among all who have had oral contraceptives, 14 of pre (38%) and 6 of postmenopausal BC patients (10%) have relied on oral contraceptives for more than 5 years. Considering the family history 29 (29%) had first order relatives with breast cancer and 32(32%) had blood relatives with other cancers. 10% had both family history of BC and have had oral contraceptives more than one year and 12% had a history of any cancer and have had oral contraceptives more than one year. However, only 2% of the patients had family history, used oral contraceptives and had breast fed for less than one year. Among the total 60% were unaware of self assessment of breast lumps and have initially identified the breast lump randomly. Nearly 30% in the study group had a family history of BC and one third has relied on oral contraceptives more than one year. Being nullparous and lack of breast feeding was not common among the study population. However, the knowledge on self assessment of BC was not satisfactory.

Key words: Breast cancer, family history, oral contraceptives

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