



A Descriptive Study To Assess The Problems, Attitude, And Practices Regarding Clothing Among Post-Mastectomy Women In PGIMER, Chandigarh.

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This descriptive study was undertaken to assess the problems, attitudes, and practices related to clothing among post-mastectomy women. **Methods:** We collected data from 100 post-mastectomy women who were attending surgical OPD. We included volunteered post-mastectomy women with signed informed consent. We gathered data by the Mastectomy Attitude Scale and questionnaire of problems, and practices regarding clothing style and analysed them by basic descriptive statistics. **Results:** Following mastectomy 21% were not happy with the fit of the clothes that were available to buy – (wear them without pinning or sewing them to make them conceal their scars and fit the changes in their body). 31% felt breast prostheses made them more desirable. 41% were less concerned about their appearance than before. The majority of subjects felt hesitation while purchasing clothes. **Conclusion:** A lot of discrepancies were observed regarding clothing problems, attitudes, and practices. The doctors and other health personnel are to be sensitized regarding the need for giving health education to the patients related to problems and practices of clothing style after mastectomy.

Keywords: Attitude, Practice, post-mastectomy, clothing

INTRODUCTION

Breast cancer is a common cancer affecting women worldwide. Almost 25% of breast cancer occurring worldwide out of which approximately 1.67 million new cases were diagnosed in the year 2012. Cases from developing countries (883,000 cases) are more as compared to more developed (79,4000) countries. In India, the prevalence rate of breast cancer is lower (25.8 per 100 000) as compared to the United Kingdom (95 per 100 000). In India, the maximum number of breast cancer cases has been reported throughout the world (25.8 per100, 000 females) with a mortality rate of 12.7 per 100,000 women. Every patient is treated individually according to the respective cancer stage and type, hormone sensitivity, age of the patient, and general health.

Materials and methods: In this current descriptive study in General Surgery OPD of PGIMER. The data collection was

done twice a week during the months of March- April 2018. 100 post-mastectomy women participated in the study. The sample was selected by total enumeration sampling method in which patients were excluded if:(1) suffered from any active complications like pus, inflammation, or swelling at the suture site (2) had any psychiatric disorder (3) had breast cancer but not undergone breast removal surgery. Ethical permission from the Institute Ethics Committee of NINE, PGIMER Chandigarh. Permission from the Head of the Department of Surgery was taken. Informed written consent was taken and confidentiality of participants was maintained.

Inclusion criteria

Women having breast cancer and who had completed 3 months of hospital based treatment after breast removal surgery as well as willing to participate in the study.

Pilot trial and data collection

The pilot study was performed on 10 women who were excluded from the research and the questionnaire was then modified based on the pilot study findings. Data was collected from volunteer participants by using the Mastectomy Attitude Scale⁵(it has five factors, of which we have used two factors i.e., factor 3(appearance satisfaction) and factor 5(concealment)). and questionnaire of problems, and practices regarding clothing style among post-mastectomy women which was validated by 10 experts in the field of nursing.

Statistical analysis

The data was coded and analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science for Windows 22). The various statistical measures used were frequency distribution, percentage, range, and standard deviation. results depict, the patient's age at the time of the survey was in the range of 30-75 years with a mean age of 52.12 ± 11.45 years, majority of the patient were in the age group of 41-50 (34%). The majority of patients were married (87%) and 70% were housewives. Data depicts, the patient's age at the time of diagnosis of cancer was in the range of 28-69 with a mean age of 52.12 ± 11.45 years. 24% of patients were in the age group of 25-35 and 47-57 (24%). Many patients (92%) have no family history of cancer and the majority of patients underwent Mastectomy (94%) followed by breast-conserving surgery (6%). Most patients were in normal weight (44%) followed by overweight (43%) and only 11% of women were obese according to Asian WHO guidelines.

Table: 1 Mastectomy Attitude Scale

Sr. No.	Item	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
	Factor 3 Appearance satisfaction				
1	Think that there is no way one could look at them and tell if they had a mastectomy	18	33	27	22
2	Wearing prosthesis (contoured from which fits into a bra) does not make them see themselves as disfigured	9	40	43	8
3	Following a mastectomy, think they are as feminine as women who have not had mastectomies	14	43	23	20
4	After having a mastectomy, feel there was no more concerned about their appearance than other women are concerned about their appearance.	11	41	37	11
5	After having a mastectomy, are still satisfied by life	17	45	32	6
6	After having a mastectomy, it has been embarrassing to shop for clothes	13	29	37	21
	Factor 5 Concealment				
1	Following the mastectomy, think a padded bra (prosthesis) worn during sexual relations would make them more desirable.	19	38	32	11
2	Feel that covering the mastectomy scar with clothing while having sexual relations makes them more desirable	19	37	28	16

Table 1: Shows the attitude of women after mastectomy. There are a total of five factors, of which we have used two factors: Appearance satisfaction and concealment. Factor I Appearance Satisfaction - Out of 100 women, 33 agreed that are couldn't tell that they had mastectomy by looking at them, while 43 thought that wearing a prosthesis would not make them feel disfigured. 41 women agreed that they were now less concerned about their looks than before, 45 women were still satisfied with their lives, and 37 women felt no embarrassment in shopping for clothes.

Factor V Concealment -38 women thought wearing prostheses made them more desirable during sexual relations and 37 women also felt that concealing their scars with clothes also made them more desirable.

Table 2: Association between Age and Mastectomy Attitude Scale

Age (in years)	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
30-40	2	13	7
41-50	2	28	4
51-60	1	21	1
≥ 60	6	21	0

Table 2: shows that for the association of the attitude of women towards mastectomy with age and it showed that attitude and age were not associated with each other ($P > 0.05$).

Table 3: Problem of post-mastectomy women regarding clothing

SR.N O.	PROBLEMS	YES	NO
1	Spend more money on clothing	39	61
2	Feel hesitation while purchasing clothes	68	32
3	Need someone while purchasing clothes	56	44
4	Need dressing room at the store	67	33
5	Worried about slipping of breast prosthesis (padding)	62	38
6	Experienced Itching, bruising, sweating due to breast prosthesis (padding)	50	50

Table 3: study depicts the problems of post-mastectomy women regarding clothing more than half (68%) of the women felt hesitation while purchasing clothes, and 67% of women needed a dressing room at the store. 62% of women were worried about slipping of breast prosthesis, 56% of women needed someone while purchasing clothes, 50% of women experienced itching, bruising, and sweating due to breast prosthesis and only 39% of women spent more money on clothes after mastectomy

Table 4: Practices regarding clothing styles among post-mastectomy women

S.No	Items	Always	Sometimes	Never
1	Wear brasserie even after mastectomy	24	63	13
2	Wear brasserie of the same style as they wore before surgery	19	56	25
3	Use breast prosthesis after mastectomy	24	57	19
4	Would like to wear all of the same styles as they wore before mastectomy	34	52	14
5	Happy with the fit of the clothes that are available to buy – (wear them without pinning or sewing them to make them conceal their scars and fit the changes in their body)	15	64	21
6	Like to shop in retail stores where they can try on the clothing so they can see how it looks and how it conceals their scars and fits.	47	38	15
7	Enjoy the convenience of buying in catalogs and do not buy many clothes at retail stores in their community or region where they live because they prefer to shop from catalogs.	9	24	67
8	Enjoy the convenience of buying clothes online and do not buy many clothes at the retail stores in my community or region where they live because they prefer to shop online	13	16	71
9	Shop online because they cannot find clothes that conceal their scars and fit the changes in their body in retail stores since mastectomy	5	23	72
10	Shop in catalogs because they cannot find clothes that conceal their scars and fit the changes in their body in retail stores since mastectomy	10	19	71

Table 4: The Data depicts the practices regarding clothing styles among mastectomy women, in which 64% of women always prefer shopping in retail stores to check proper fitting and concealment of scars. While 24% bought clothes from catalogs and 16% enjoyed the convenience of online shopping. Considering the aspect of wearing brasserie, 13% never wore while more than half (63%) of the women preferred to wear otherwise

DISCUSSION

Breasts are an essential body part for females. Women associate their sense of femininity and confidence with breasts. Mastectomy gravely affects self-esteem and sexuality as women lose a cardinal part of their body which makes them perceive themselves as disfigured. It directly affects their quality of life. So, the present study aimed to assess the problems, attitudes, and practices regarding clothing among post-mastectomy women. A mastectomy attitude scale was employed to assess the nature of attitude among post-mastectomy women. The mastectomy attitude scale has a total of five factors, of which two factors were used for this study (factor 3- appearance satisfaction and factor 5- concealment).

A similar assessment was carried by the School of Nursing, University of Canberra in Australia which hypothesized that the subjects had positive attitudes towards their lives and felt that mastectomy was essential. In this study, similar results were achieved with post-mastectomy women having 97% positive attitude while only 3% depicted negative attitude. They had developed a positive attitude towards themselves with the support of their family and were not hesitant to admit that they had undergone mastectomy to fight of threat to their lives.

In the current study, 13% of women never wore brasserie after mastectomy while 52% of women wore all the same styles of clothing as they had before mastectomy to conceal their scars. Whereas around one-fourth of the women shop online only a few women preferred to shop from the catalogue and more than half of the women were satisfied with the fitting of the clothes available at the retail stores.

In the same study, other aspects related to expenditure on clothing and treatment pathways focusing on scarring issues related to breast reconstruction were studied. The clothing market has not identified this target population and the necessity to alter the designs accordingly. However, similar results were achieved with 39% of women saying that they spend more money on clothes after mastectomy. In this study, it was also noticed that changing room facilities play an important role in purchasing. More than half of women are afraid of slipping off breast prostheses.

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