

## Poster Presentation 19

### A COMPARISON OF SELF BREAST EXAMINATION PRACTICES BETWEEN POST MASTECTOMY AND PATIENTS COMING FOR SCREENING.

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#### Introduction

The early detection of breast cancer is the key to successful management. The role of self examination of breast is invaluable to detect any suspicious lesion and these patients can then be further investigated and referred accordingly.

#### Methodology

The study was conducted at the Breast Health Center of the National Hospital of Sri Lanka. Two samples were selected. One consisted of 50 consecutive patients who underwent mastectomy from 01-01-2007. They were assessed at three months postoperatively. Other sample consisted of 50 consecutive patients referred to the breast health centre for screening mammograms during the same period.

#### Results

38(76%) patients from the screening population and 48 (96%) from post-mastectomy group were aware on the importance of SEB as a tool for detecting breast malignancies early ( $P=0.0076$ ). However, the actual number of patients performing SEB were 27(54%) in the screening group and 2(4%) in the post-mastectomy group ( $P < 0.0001$ ).

Out of those in the screening group who were performing SEB only 9 were practicing it at regular monthly basis and 19 had technical errors in the method. The 2 patients performing SEB in the post mastectomy group had deficiencies in timing and technique.

None of the patients in either group was aware on the necessity of clinical breast examination annually. 8 patients in the screening and none in the post mastectomy group had a correct idea about the importance of follow up mammograms. The main source of information was public media in both groups.

#### Conclusions

The knowledge on the importance of SEB was significantly high in post-mastectomy group but not the proportion of performers. Both groups had a lot of deficiencies in the timing and technique of SEB. This was also true with regard to the knowledge on clinical breast examination and follow up mammograms.