Editorial

Role of physical therapy in patients of post-surgery breast cancer

The second most common cancer among women after skin cancer is the breast cancer which has been seen in 1 of every 8th woman around the globe. According to American cancer society, with the high rate of occurrence, it is also obvious that 7 out of 8 women can never have the cancer. The mortality rate of breast cancer is 1 in 38 woman which is about 2.6%.1 When the cancer cells keep regenerating, mastectomy after breast conservative therapy is the only option for treatment afterward radiation therapy, which has shown a significant impact on the patients of breast cancer. After breast surgery or radiation therapy, an abnormal swelling called Lymphedema can be devolved in the arm, hand, breast or torso as a side effect. This can appear after months or years after the treatment. Lymph is a clear fluid that disseminate throughout the body to remove wastes, bacteria or other waste products from the tissues and the edema is the buildup of excessive fluids in the tissue. One of the most usual problems is lymphedema which is an abnormal swelling and can develop in the interstitial tissues of torso, breast, arm or hand as a side effect of radiation therapy or breast cancer surgery. Lymphedema can persist in some females during the months or even years after treatment ends. Physiotherapy has an impactful role in patients and survivors of breast cancer. Exercise should be the key note activity post breast surgery in order to make the muscles mobile and to refrain from lymphedemas. In review of literature, many studies have married up the positive effects of exercise such as for early post-operative: Hand exercises using a ball or hand grip exercises, Elbow flexion and extension, Elbow lateral flexion on day 3. Following next week, exercises should progress to shoulder such as: Shoulder flexion, extension and abduction gradually, Low resistive exercises. This will ultimately enhance the muscular strength and endurance at the site of incision of the surgery which includes skin deep to muscles of breast bone to the armpit. These exercises can also increase the joint range of motion and help in restoration of functional activities.

Reference:

01- Smith RA, Andrews KS, Brooks D, Fedewa SA, Manassaram-Baptiste D, Saslow D, et al. Cancer screening in the United States, 2017: a review of current American Cancer Society guidelines and current issues in cancer screening. CA: a cancer journal for clinicians. 2017;67(2):100-21.

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