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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DELAYED PRESENTATION OF SYMPTOMATIC BREAST CANCER AT ONCOLOGY UNIT, TEACHING HOSPITAL BATTICALOA

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Background: Breast cancer is the common and frequently fatal disease in women. Worldwide 5th most common cancer occurring in both genders. Cancer incidence in Sri Lanka is 67.9/100,000. Breast cancer incidence is increased in last 20 years in Sri-Lanka. Delay in presentation can be patient delay or system delay. Prolonged delay (interval >12wks, either patient or system) results in lower survival.

Objective: To determine and evaluate the factors influencing the delayed presentation of breast cancer.

Methods: Cross sectional descriptive study was conducted among symptomatic breast cancer patients attending to Oncology unit, THB. Data was collected using questionnaire survey from patients during July 2016 - January 2017.

Results: Out of the 100 respondents, 46% had presented within 3 months of diagnosis. Others (54%) had delayed, of which 4% were between 30-39 years, 31% were 40-49 years, 39% were 50-59 years, 22% were 60-69 years, 4% were 70-79 years. Only 7 were unmarried. Among those 7, 71% was delayed presented in contrast to the 52% of married women. Among delayed, 26% were Tamils, 22% were Sinhalese, 52% were Muslims. Education level, economical status of patient also significantly affect the time of presentation (P = 0.016). Most feel shy to share symptoms (p<0.001). Delayers have lack of awareness about cancer screening (P=0.001). Self-caring affects the time of presentation (p<0.001). Among delayers some (p=0.05) had symptoms other than breast lump.

Conclusion: Factors influencing delayed presentation were age (<50 years), ethnicity (Muslim), education level, income (<Rs15,000/month), less self-care, first symptom not being lump, shyness, lack of awareness about self-breast examination.

Keywords: Breast cancer, Delayed presentation, Patient delay, System delay