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Surgical options in management of early breast cancer in the older age group

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Introduction: Breast cancer is regarded as the commonest malignant disease in women and accounted for 27% of cancers in developed countries. It is mainly diagnosed in females of over 50 years of age and 33% of patients of age of ≥ 70 years. It is noticed that the older patients are treated with a narrower range of options that usually offered to the younger group. Here we explore the surgical techniques used to treat breast cancer in the older group.

Method: A database review identified surgically treated 170 patients aged ≥ 70 years with early breast cancer had been operated for breast cancer between 2010-2017 at Basildon University Hospital in England and Greater Poland Oncology Centre in Poznan, Poland. The procedures included mastectomy, Breast Conservative Surgery (BCS), axillary Sentinel Node Biopsy (SNB) or Axillary Clearance (ANC).

Result: Mastectomy was performed in 72% and 28% had BCS. Mastectomy with ANC was done in 26%, where mastectomy and SNB biopsy in 46%. Histology showed 76% invasive ductal carcinoma and 11% invasive lobular carcinoma. The number of elderly breast cancer patients is rising as a result of increase in the aged population. The presumption was that breast cancer patients of older age group have comorbidities that override the life-threatening risks associated with cancer. These have resulted in deprivation of these patients from optimal treatment and are treated with a narrower range of treatment options than usually offered to their younger counterparts.

Conclusion: Elderly breast cancer patients should be given the equal opportunity to be offered treatment in the same way as their younger counterparts.

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