

“Lymphedema in Patients Treated for Breast or Head and Neck Cancer”



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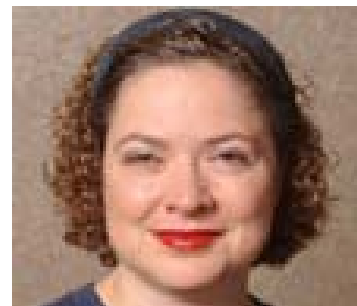
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Background

Primary Research in
Cancer-related
Lymphedema

- Breast
- Head and Neck



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Breast Lymphedema



Summary of Research Findings - Breast



- **20% - 30% develop lymphedema in arms (Truncal statistics unknown)**
 - Most by year 3
 - 10% by year 2
- **Influencing Factors**
 - **Socio-demographic Variables (Age, Income, Etc.)**
 - ✦ Did not influence
 - **Lymphedema Duration**
 - ✦ Did not influence
 - **Body Mass Index**
 - ✦ Correlates with everything we measure
 - ✦ Influences development (>30 BMI = 4 times more likely), arm size, and symptoms

Summary of Findings - Breast



- **Measurement of Arm / Symptoms / + Diagnosis**
 - Tape measure and Perometer (infrared scanner) – Both measure whole arm
 - ✦ Tape is inexpensive
 - ✦ Perometer more accurate
 - Bioelectrical impedance (single and multifrequency) – Measures lymph fluid
 - ✦ Earlier detection
 - ✦ Self-measurement potential
 - Self-report of symptoms
 - ✦ Tightness
 - ✦ Heaviness

Summary of Research Findings - Breast



- **Co-existing Medical Problems / Medications**
 - Orthopedic
 - ✦ Neck and shoulder
 - ✦ Arthritis
 - ✦ Fibromyalgia
 - Diabetes
 - Carpal Tunnel
 - Cardiac Medications
 - Hot Flash Medications
 - Osteoporosis Medications/Calcium Supplements

Summary of Research Findings - Breast



- **Symptoms**

- **Altered limb sensation**

- ✦ Heaviness
- ✦ Aching
- ✦ Hardness
- ✦ Tightness
- ✦ Burning
- ✦ Pins and Needles
- ✦ Swelling
- ✦ Stabbing

- **Loss of confidence in body**

- **Decreased physical activity**

- **Fatigue**

- **Psychological distress**

- **Sleep**

- **Sexuality**

- **Body Image**

- **Sadness**

- **Loss of “normal”**

- **Marginalization by society**

Summary of Research Findings - Breast



- **Function**
 - Modification of sport and leisure activities
 - Overall function is likely similar to others of same age
- **Quality of Life**
 - Lower than breast cancer survivors without lymphedema
 - Lower than women who have not had cancer
 - **BUT...** only slightly lower, and basically still quite good

Summary of Research Findings - Breast



- **Self-care (About 50% do any kind of self-care)**
 - **Barriers**
 - ✦ Expense
 - ✦ Time
 - ✦ Lack of positive outcomes
 - ✦ Painful
 - ✦ Disrupts life
 - **Benefits**
 - ✦ Decrease in cost of acute treatment
 - ✦ Decrease in infections
 - ✦ Increase in perception of “control”

Summary of Research Findings - Breast



- **Intervention Studies**
 - Psychological / Emotional Support (Expressive Writing)
 - ✦ Strong emotions
 - ✦ Writing perceived as helpful
 - Physical (Advanced Pneumatic Device as Self-care)
 - ✦ Trunk
 - Increase in sleep
 - Decrease in symptoms
 - Decrease in circumferential measurements
 - Increase “massage”
 - ✦ Arm
 - Increase in sleep
 - Decrease in symptoms
 - Decrease in circumferential measurements
 - Increase “massage”
 - ✦ Laser Study in Progress – No data

Head and Neck Lymphedema



Summary of Research Findings – Head and Neck



- **Number of Head and Neck Cancer Survivors Increasing**
 - Combined Chemo-radiation extending life
 - HPV virus causing higher percentages of head and neck cancer (Also, responds well to treatment – more survivors)
- **Our study of 81 patients ≥ 3 months after treatment**
 - 25% no lymphedema
 - 75% lymphedema
 - ✦ 10% external
 - ✦ 40% internal
 - ✦ 50% both

Summary of Research Findings – Head and Neck



- **Influencing Factors**
 - Radiation
 - Dose of radiation (higher = more risk for lymphedema)
 - Getting chemotherapy and radiation at the same time
- **INTENSITY OF TREATMENT FROM RADIATION AND CHEMOTHERAPY – NOT SURGERY PLACE THESE PATIENTS AT HIGHER RISK**

Summary of Research Findings – Head and Neck



- **Measurement and Assessment**
 - Internally with a scope
 - Externally by physical examination / photography
 - Combined – using all methods
 - Measurement is in testing phases right now (including symptom assessments)

Internal Lymphedema – Head and Neck



No Lymphedema



Severe Lymphedema

Summary of Research Findings – Head and Neck



- **Co-Existing Medical Problems / Medications**
 - Unknown at this time due to lack of research

Summary of Research Findings – Head and Neck



- **Symptoms**

- Swallowing difficulty
- Mucous/dry mouth
- Impaired nutrition
- Pain
- Voice Changes

- **Psychological distress**

- Anxiety
- Body image disturbance
- Depression

Summary of Research Findings – Head and Neck



- **Function**
 - Hearing, head movement, and jaw movement impaired
- **Quality of Life**
 - Poor

Summary of Research Findings – Head and Neck



- **Intervention**
 - None
- **Psychological / Emotional support**
 - None
- **Physical / Self-care**
 - None

Breast and Head and Neck Similarities and Differences



- Psychosocial symptoms of body image disturbance, sadness, social isolation, and distress in both groups
- Tightness and tingling in both groups
- Quality of life decreased in both, but more so in head and neck
- More functional impairment in head and neck
- More infection in breast
- Both get truncal swelling
- Head and neck appears to progress more rapidly “woody neck”
- More treatment options for breast
- Much more research and treatment reimbursement for breast than for head and neck
- Head and neck life-threatening when severe

Summary of Our Work To-Date : Breast Cancer



Regardless of the cause...

**Lymphedema exacts a high toll
on patients and families**

**Patients survive cancer, only to
develop a “chronic” illness.**

Questions

