Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence of lymphedema in women under treatment for breast cancer in a referral center in southeastern Brazil

Version: 3 Date: 29 August 2012

Reviewer: Aase S, A Sagen

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Specific comments and recommendations, second revision

1. Material
The description of the material still does not inform about the age as described in the response letter 56 to 75 years. In table I, the category 57 to 99 years is thus misleading.

2. Measurements
OK, but still vague. There are many VAS scales used for measuring pain; 100 mm or categorized into 10 or 5? The time interval for the registration is very important. Did the patients measure the pain for the last 14 days? last year? the last 5 years? Or present pain?

3. Discussion
The reported prevalence of lymphedema is very high (almost 45%) compared to other high quality reports in this field (around 15 to 20 % in patients going through axillary lymph node dissection) 1 2, 3.

The authors do not fully discuss important matters and weaknesses of the investigation; like prevalence of arm lymphedema without prospective (preoperative) assessments. As described in the previous review, a relative arm-volume (to control arm volume) would have been a much more valid criterion for measurement of arm lymphedema.

Do the surgery methods used in Brazil differ from the surgery methods used in US or Europe? Can this be the reason for the different prevalence?

This study is too important not to take these considerations into a revision.

4. Hypothesis
Normally, the background/introduction chapter ends with a hypothesis. This is
missing. Hypotheses make the readers understand the scientific aim of the study and therefore also explain the choice of statistical analyses that are used.

Reference List


Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests