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Examining Rehabilitation Referral Patterns for Breast Cancer Patients with Mastectomy: A Retrospective Descriptive Chart Review

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Title of the Doctoral Presentation: Examining Rehabilitation Referral Patterns for Breast Cancer Patients with Mastectomy: A Retrospective Descriptive Chart Review

Date of Doctoral Presentation: 8/19/23

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Abstract:

Introduction:

Advances in health care for those with breast cancer (BC), have led to people living longer lives, however many continue to have difficulty completing daily activities (Hwang et al., 2015; Keesing et al., 2018; Lovelace et al., 2019; Stout et al., 2015; Stubblefield,). Research explains that physical rehabilitation is beneficial for people with BC, however is not always being recommended (Cheville et al., 2008; Hwang et al., 2015; Pergoletti, 2014; Rafn et al., 2020; Stout et al., 2016; Stout et al., 2015).

Objectives:

This study looked at rehabilitation referral patterns and trends for women diagnosed with BC who had undergone a mastectomy.

Methods:

A retrospective descriptive chart review was conducted. Medical records of 164 individuals with BC were reviewed. Data collected included demographics, cancer stage, adjuvant treatment types, referral orders for occupational therapy (OT) and physical therapy (PT), referring provider's specialty, phase along continuum of care in which referral was ordered, common comorbidities, and performance measures scores.

Results:

Data analysis revealed that only forty-eight (29.3%) were referred for physical rehabilitation, with 9.1% being referred to OT and forty-six (29.3%) to PT. Most referrals were ordered during the adjuvant/survivorship phases, while only one was ordered during the pre-operative phase. A total of 233 instances of impairments were found where no referrals were ordered, but may have been indicated.

Conclusion:

Results suggest that rehabilitation services continue to be severely underutilized. Several areas were identified that could be utilized to assist providers with referral decision making.

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Synopsis: This study shows that there needs to a better job of making sure those with breast cancer know about and use rehabilitation services. If doctors understand when to recommend therapy, it can help bridge the gap in care and make patients' lives better. In the future, studies should look at how much doctors know about these therapies and how they can work together to provide better care for these patients. This could help to find where medical training needs to be improved to give patients a more complete and coordinated care.

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Keywords: Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Breast Cancer, Continuum of Care, Quality of life

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