

The Challenge of COVID-19: The Biological Characteristics and Outcomes in a Series of 130 Breast Cancer Patients Operated on During the Pandemic

Abdalla Saad Abdalla Al-zawi^{1,2}, Amira Asaad¹, Rebecca Fisher¹, Gill Clayton³, Abdul Syed⁴, Marina Barron⁵, Philip Idaewor¹, Ali Salih¹, Mohamed Elamass¹, Zina Aladili⁴, Jay Menon¹, Aaliya Uddin¹, Hilary Gee¹, Denise Bonner¹, Helen Merron¹, Karen Duncombe¹, Gabriel Campaner¹, Firas Alkistawi¹, John Targett¹, Sudhakar Reddy Eleti⁴, Turhan Comez¹, Simon Smith³, Harun Thomas⁴, Bryony Lovett¹, Wayne Chicken¹

¹Department of Surgery, Basildon & Thurrock University Hospital, Basildon, United Kingdom

²Faculty of Health, Education, Medicine & Social Care, Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford, United Kingdom

³Department of Surgery, Broomfield Hospital, Chelmsford, United Kingdom

⁴Department of Surgery, Southend University Hospital, Southend-on-Sea, United Kingdom

⁵Department of Surgery, South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen, Northern Ireland

Abstract

Background: The worldwide outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) emerged in Wuhan, China close to the end of 2019. We analyse the clinical characteristics and management outcomes of a small group of patients who have been treated in the early stage of the COVID-19 disease, and discuss the impact of the pandemic on the service delivered to breast cancer patients.

Material & methods: We analysed a cohort of 130 breast cancer patients who underwent elective surgical procedures during the early period of COVID-19. The patients were operated on in the period from March 16th, 2020 to May 18th, 2020.

Results: All the patients were female, with an age range of 33-88 years, with a median age of 57.6 years. Most of the cases were admitted as a day case surgery after passing through a preoperative screening pathway, which was developed gradually. Patients were contacted by phone after their surgery to ensure that they have had no symptoms and were reviewed in person two weeks after the procedure with histology results. Only one patient developed COVID-19 symptoms after surgery and recovered.

Conclusions: Early and careful implementation of modified practice policies during emerging situation of viral pandemics will reduce the risk of perioperative complications, reduce the risk of patient to staff to patient transmission and minimize the negative impact of COVID-19 on breast cancer management.

Key words: COVID-19, SARS-CoV, MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV2, ACE2, breast cancer