

SCREENING FOR BREAST CANCER IN USERS AND NON USERS OF HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY (HRT)

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Introduction

Screening for breast cancer in patients using HRT remains a controversial issue. There is evidence to show that in the western world daily use of combined HRT increases a woman's chance of developing breast cancer by about 5% to 6% with each year of use. The objective of this study was to compare the incidence of breast cancer in women taking HRT with a similar group of post-menopausal women who are not on HRT.

Methodology

The study group included 585 post-menopausal women who attended a specialized breast clinic for screening during a 52 month period from August 2002. Of these patients 322 were on HRT. None of these patients had any other major risk factors for breast cancer.

Results

There were 322 users and 263 non users of HRT.

A significant difference in age was seen between the two groups with the mean age of them being 52.5 for HRT users and 54.3 for non users ($p=0.07$). Duration of HRT use ranged from less than 1 year to 25 years, with a mean of 3.5 years. Incidence of breast cancer was similar in both groups, being 1/322 (0.31 %) for HRT users and 1/263 (0.38 %) for non-users ($p = 0.88$).

Conclusions

In Sri Lankan women who have no other risk factors the use of HRT does not seem to increase the risk of developing breast cancer. However, larger studies are needed to demonstrate the impact of HRT on breast cancer