

Physicians' knowledge, attitude and behaviour regarding fertility issues for young breast cancer patients

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Results

Introduction

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among Indian women. Approximately 6% to 7% of women diagnosed with breast cancer are younger than 40 years at the time of their diagnosis. For many young women with early breast cancer, fertility is a priority. Increasing survival rates in patients affected by oncological disease and advances in reproductive medicine have led to the development and increasing use of various fertility preservation techniques.

One hundred physicians responded to the proforma. These included general surgeons, surgical oncologists, plastic surgeons, gynaecologists and surgery residents. Out of these physicians 19% were females. Physicians who had better knowledge score and positive attitudes towards fertility preservation were more likely to discuss potential fertility issues with cancer patients. Social stigma, socioeconomic status, lack of knowledge and awareness, psychological and emotional issues were identified as major barriers for discussing fertility issues with the patients.

Aims

To study physicians' knowledge, attitude and behaviour regarding fertility issues for young breast cancer patients.

Conclusion

Proper knowledge and a positive attitude, of the physician, towards fertility preservation in young breast cancer patients is very important in today's clinical scenario. Effective programs and protocols should be developed for a better approach towards fertility preservation by the physician. Better awareness, about breast cancer and fertility preservation, should be spread among the masses to overcome a few of the issues that were identified as barriers for discussing fertility with the patients.

Materials and methods

A proforma was developed, for physicians treating breast cancer (N=100), to self evaluate their knowledge, attitude and practice behaviour regarding fertility preservation in young breast cancer patients. The proforma included questions on knowledge about fertility issues, practice behaviour, potential barriers for discussing fertility issues, attitude toward fertility preservation and responding physicians' socio-demographic backgrounds.