

INTRAOPERATIVE RADIOTHERAPY FOR TREATMENT OF BREAST CANCER IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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The fast pace of urbanization in many developing countries coupled with the imposed changes in life style has resulted in many alterations in disease patterns. Breast cancer is one of the diseases that has shown increasing incidence over the last decades with young age and advanced disease at initial presentations. The scarcity of specialized treatment centers in the region further impacts negatively on the outcomes limiting the surgical options to liberal adoption of mastectomies. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) consensus, the number of radiation oncology centers worldwide is scarce and mainly clustered in developed countries. Developing countries are deprived from adequate centers to cover the population needs to radiation treatments. Based on the many emerging studies and strictly adhering selection criteria intraoperative radiotherapy (IORT) has proven efficient, convenient, and cost effective, and can be used in conventional operating rooms. It spares or shortens the patients' the long sessions of external beam radiation while providing equally effective outcomes. In developing countries, the lack of structured breast cancer awareness programs coupled by the liberal adoption of mastectomies for young females results in patients shying away until the disease advances. IORT is an appealing treatment method which will propagate breast conserving therapy (BCT), early detection and restricting unnecessary mastectomies. Promoting such modality helps to overcome the shortcomings that are encountered due to the limited radiation oncology centers in the area. Alternatively, due to the young age at presentation, IORT may be of more benefit when used as boost therapy, this will reciprocally reduce the burden inflicted on radiation oncology centers by the expanding patient population.

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