

Letter to Editor: Three-year survival of women with breast cancer in Basrah, Iraq

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Dear authors,

We read with great interest the original article entitled “Three-year survival of women with breast cancer in Basrah, Iraq” by Al-Asadi et al (1) which was the first ever article to assess the survival rate of breast cancer in Basrah, Iraq. The article is very informative as it highlighted the prognostication, however we are hopeful that an extension study can be initiated for this cohort as most studies use five-year rather than mere three-year survival rate.

The article has concluded that late stage and tumour grade were associated with poorer survival, however certain prognostic factors such as hormonal receptors, socioeconomic status and educational level were unfortunately missing. We believe that low knowledge and practise towards breast self-examination also will provide a similar outcome (2). This will in turn cause delay in diagnosis, leading to late stage presentation and poor survival rate as what could be observed in this study.

Delay in cancer diagnosis and treatment can occur at any level which includes patients’ or even physicians’ who do not recognise cancer symptoms or act on them in time. Therefore, media messages for community awareness should increase public knowledge of cancer symptoms and the importance of seeking timely medical attention. Meanwhile, physicians should also be regularly updated on recognising cancer, related guidelines, continuity of care, and prompt access to specialist care (3).

Keywords: breast cancer, survival rate, Iraq, prognostic

References

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