RISK FACTORS IN CARCINOMA OF THE BREAST

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Introduction: The objective of this study was to analyze some of the major risk factors present in patients diagnosed with carcinoma of the breast.

Materials and methods: To achieve this 643 patient records spanning over a period of 5 years were studied.

Results: All but two patients were females. Highest number of cases was seen in the age range of 40 to 60, 413 cases (64%). The 30 to 40 age group had 87 patients (13.5%) and 228 patients were in the 40 to 50 age group (35.4%) while the 50 to 60 age group had 185 patients (28.7%). The median age for menarche was 13 and 14, while the commonest age range for menopause was 45 to 55. Active menstrual cycles were seen in 307 patients (48%). Mean range for estrogen exposure was 30 to 40 years. Of the patients with children 89.2% had breast fed their infants. The average number of children was 3. A positive family history of breast carcinoma was seen in 55 patients (8.5%). Hormonal contraceptives have been used by 112 patients (17.4%). Hormonal replacement therapy has been used by only 14 patients.

Discussion and conclusions: In conclusion, breast carcinoma case load is highest in the 40 to 60 year age group while the 5th decade holds the most number of cases. Mean age for menarche and menopause appear to be similar to that of the normal Sri Lankan population. A considerable number of patients with breast carcinoma appear to be having an active menstrual cycle and therefore still has reproductive capacity. Hormonal contraceptive usage and hormonal replacement therapy appears to be minimal in this population.