Background

- Many breast cancer patients suffer hair loss due to chemotherapy.
- Not only scalp hair loss, but also eyebrow loss and eyelash loss are traumatic for patients.
- There has been little research in this field until now.
- To clarify the actual situation concerning appearance issues in breast cancer patients who received adjuvant chemotherapy, we conducted a questionnaire survey.

Methods

- Disease-free breast cancer patients who have received adjuvant chemotherapy containing anthracycline and/or taxane within 5 years were recruited at 47 hospitals or clinics in Japan from April to October 2013.
- The patients participating in this survey completed a 65-question questionnaire concerning appearance issues (48) and their perception of physical and non-physical side effects (17).
- This study was approved by the ethics committee of each institute.

Patients

1,511 patients returned the questionnaire. 35 patients were ineligible.

- The mean age of the 1478 patients was 54.7 years (range 10-79 years).
- 31% of the responders were men.
- About 80% of the responders were married.
- About 60% of the responders had 1 or 2 children.
- About 40% of the responders were employed.
- About 20% of the responders had a disease other than breast cancer.
- About 10% of the responders hadinsurance.

Results

Q: How severe was the suffering you experienced during chemotherapy?

- Hair loss
- Fatigue
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Sleep disorder
- Other

- The use period of wigs (Kaplan-Meier method)

- The results of our survey demonstrated the outline of hair loss and appearance issues in breast cancer patients who underwent chemotherapy. Hair loss is the most distressing and occasionally the most long-lasting side effect. These facts suggested the need for long-term and careful support of these patients.

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