Background

- Altered appearance due to chemotherapy is a very distressing adverse event and may not recover for a long time after chemotherapy.
- To clarify the current status of appearance changes and support systems for it, we conducted a national questionnaire survey of breast cancer patients who had undergone chemotherapy in Japan.
- Here we report the long-term recovery of scalp hair loss during and after chemotherapy.

Patients and methods

- Questionnaire: between April and October 2013. ‘Patients’ appearance issues related to chemotherapy’ (scalp hair, eyebrows, eyelashes, nails, skin) Current status of support systems for their appearance
- Effect of chemotherapy regimens endocrine therapy duration after chemotherapy
- Physicians at each hospital asked their patients to fill out the questionnaire and mail it directly to the data center.
- Eligibility: breast cancer without any recurrence underwent adjuvant or neoadjuvant chemotherapy containing anthracycline+cytotoxic chemotherapy (AC), docetaxel (DOC), or ACD

Results

- Scalp hair status was analyzed in a cross-sectional manner according to the chemotherapy regimen and the interval after chemotherapy.

Number of patients by chemotherapy regimen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regimen</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACP</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOC</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACD</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extent of hair loss during chemotherapy

- Total
- ACP
- ACD
- DOC

Timing of beginning of hair growth

- Total
- ACP
- ACD
- DOC

Incidence of scalp hair loss during chemotherapy

- Total
- ACP
- ACD
- DOC

Conclusions

Almost all breast cancer patients experienced severe hair loss during standard chemotherapy, but a recovery trend was noted after chemotherapy. However, hair growth did not recover to various degrees in a significant number of patients even at 3–5 years after chemotherapy, especially in those who had received taxane-containing regimens. We should consider the need for support of patients who experience chemotherapy-induced hair loss.

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