National survey of long-term recovery from chemotherapy-induced hair loss in patients with breast cancer


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Background
- Altered appearance due to chemotherapy is a very distressing adverse event and can remain unrecovered for a long time after chemotherapy.
- To clarify the current status of appearance change and its support systems, we conducted a national questionnaire survey of patients with breast cancer who had received chemotherapy in Japan.
- Here, we report on 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 and the interval from chemotherapy.
- Physicians at each hospital asked their patients to fill out the questionnaire and mail it directly to the data center.
- Eligibility: breast cancer who had received chemotherapy in Japan.
- Exclusion: mainly because >5 years had passed after chemotherapy.
- Scalp hair status was analyzed in a cross-sectional manner according to chemotherapy regimen and the interval from chemotherapy.

Results
- 1511 patients at 47 hospitals (response rate, 82%; 1511/1853)
- 1448 questionnaires were finally analyzed
- Questionnaire between April and October 2013.
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Conclusions
- Almost all patients with breast cancer experienced severe hair loss during standard chemotherapy, but a recovery trend was noted after chemotherapy.
- However, hair remained unrecovered 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.

Acknowledgement
- We wish to thank:
  - All patients who participated in this survey.
  - All investigators at the 47 institutions and CSPOR.
  - Health Outcomes Research (CSP-HOR) of the Japanese Cancer Research Foundation, for funding this study.

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After 3 years, patients who had received ACP, DOC, and ACD had significantly less volume recovery than patients who had received AC (P<0.001 for all).

Conclusions