

Sentinel lymph node biopsy before neoadjuvant chemotherapy for clinical axillary node negative breast cancer: impact on staging

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Abstract

Background: The ideal timing of sentinel lymph node biopsy (SLNB) is still, by far, a matter of debate. Meanwhile, several authors reported SLNB after neoadjuvant chemotherapy (NC).

Methods: We evaluated the accuracy and feasibility of SLNB before NC using a combined procedure (blue dye and radio-labelled detection). Axillary lymph node dissection (ALND) was performed after completion of NC in patients with breast cancer having clinically node-negative axillae.

Results: Among the 18 women who had metastatic SLNB (67%) detected before NC, 3 (17%) had additional metastatic node on ALND. While 15 women who had no metastatic SLNB also had no involved nodes in ALND after NC.

Conclusion: SLNB done before NC is a reliable and accurate diagnostic tool to stage the clinically negative axillae in breast cancer, permitting to avoid ALND after NC for patients with negative SLNB.

Keywords: SLNB; Breast Cancer; Negative Axilla.