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Review

Factors influencing utilization and satisfaction with external breast prosthesis in patients with mastectomy: A systematic review



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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The aim of this study is to describe and analyse the factors which influence utilization of EBPs among breast cancer patients worldwide and particularly in China.

Methods: Literature searches were conducted in Wanfang, CNKI, and PubMed databases in order to identify relevant articles published in both Chinese and English up to October 2014. The phrase “external breast prosthesis” in Chinese was used to search titles, abstracts, and key words to find articles in Wanfang and CNKI electronic databases. Synonyms and related terms for external breast prosthesis were combined and used for searches performed in PubMed. Additional references were subsequently extracted from the bibliographies of all included articles and reviews. Qualitative analysis was applied in this study rather than meta-analysis.

Results: The number of relevant studies published in other countries is five times greater than the literature published in China, with most articles written by Australian scientists. Based on the existing references, reconstruction, comfort, appearance, cost, mental status, and supportive information were the main factors influencing choice of treatment options by patients.

Conclusion: Six main factors influencing EBP use worldwide were identified. Although the number of breast cancer cases per year is increasing at a much higher rate in China relative to the average number globally, relevant studies on Chinese patients are lacking. Thus, further studies should be undertaken in China in order to develop effective service modalities in order to improve quality of life of patients.

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1. Background

Breast cancer is one of the major public health issues affecting females worldwide, and the age of patients is becoming younger [1–4]. With continuous advancements in cancer treatment, patients with breast cancer can expect to significantly extend their lifespan with surgery and chemotherapy. However, losing part of or the entire breast through surgery, including breast conserving surgery and mastectomy, may lead to new problems during the recovery period. Significant negative effects impacting self image and the mental status of patients may develop, and eventually decrease their quality of life [3,6–8].

Nowadays, breast cancer patients often choose not to undergo reconstructive surgery for various reasons, such as the tough recovery time, financial status, and physical condition [5]. In these instances, external breast prosthesis (EBP) has become an effective alternative for patients [4,7,9]. Among western countries, up to 90% of women use an EBP after surgery [5,10], and the related service provided tends to be very effective. However, there are still some patients refusing to wear prosthesis, and even though they have an EBP, they will not always use it for various reasons.

In China, only 60% of patients wear breast prosthesis after mastectomy. Thus, the aim of this study was to review relevant literature systematically, to describe and analyse the factors which influence utilization of EBPs among breast cancer patients, and finally to promote the use of EBPs in Chinese breast cancer patients in order to enhance their quality of life.

2. Methods

2.1. Search strategy

Literature searches were conducted in Wanfang, CNKI, and PubMed to identify relevant articles published in both Chinese and English up to October 2014. The phrase “external breast prosthesis” in Chinese was used to search titles, abstracts, and keywords to find articles in Wanfang and CNKI electronic databases. Synonyms and related terms for external breast prosthesis were combined and used for searches performed in PubMed. All synonyms used are listed in the search syntax (see Table 1). No restrictions or limitations were used in the initial search in order to ensure that all related articles were included. Additional references were subsequently extracted from the bibliographies of all included articles and reviews.

2.2. Search selection

2.2.1. Eligibility criteria

The definition of an external breast prosthesis (plural: prostheses) was a synthetic breast or part of a breast that appears real when worn in a bra or under clothing. Studies included in the review met the following criteria: 1) any article published before October 2014; 2) any study with an emphasis on external breast prostheses; 3) any study design; 4) articles in Chinese or English. Exclusion criteria were the following:

Table 1 – Search synonyms and results in PubMed, Wanfang and CNKI.

Search string	hits
PubMed	
“breast implants” [MeSH Terms] OR breast prosthesis [Text Word] AND external [Text Word]	50
Wanfang	
External breast prosthesis (Chinese) in title or keywords	7
CNKI	
External breast prosthesis (Chinese) in title	28
External breast prosthesis (Chinese) in keywords	3
External breast prosthesis (Chinese) in abstract	24

1) any study related to breast implant prosthesis; 2) empirical articles due to the absence of evidence.

2.2.2. Study screening and data extraction

Titles and abstracts were screened by one researcher for relevance based upon the eligibility criteria of language, external breast prosthesis, and recorded as potentially relevant ($n = 18$) or excluded from the review because they did not meet inclusion criteria. Fifteen complete articles published in journals were obtained, and articles were written in English ($n = 12$) and Chinese ($n = 3$). Additional references in English ($n = 3$) were obtained from the bibliographies.

Data were extracted by one reviewer and checked by a second. Items extracted were the following: first author, year of publication, nationalities of researchers, study design, data source, participants, and factors influencing utilization or satisfaction of external breast prosthesis (Table 2 and Table 3).

2.2.3. Data analysis

Due to the heterogeneity in study design and outcome indicators, qualitative analysis was applied in this study rather than meta-analysis. The six main factors influencing utilization of external breast prosthesis identified through data extraction were the following: reconstruction, comfort, appearance and occasional limitations, cost, psychological issues, and supportive information. The study described and concluded research results based on these six factors.

3. Results

3.1. Results of database searches

The selection process for the identification of articles pertaining to the utilization of external breast prostheses is shown in detail in Fig. 1. Initially, 50 articles in English and 35 in Chinese were screened based on the eligibility criteria. After evaluation, 15 papers in English and three in Chinese were included in the study.

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