Phase III	Status	n	ORR %	PFS (months)
AT resistant MBC I + C vs C (046), n 752	TNeg I + C	91	27%	4.1 (3.35−4.37)
	TNeg C	96	9%	2.1 (1.45−2.8)
	No- TNeg I + C	284	37%	7.1 (6.14−8.08)
	No- TNeg C	281	16%	5. (4.1−5.55)

* evaluated by Independent Radiological Committee.
AT, anthracycline–taxane; C, capecitabine; I, Ixabepilone.

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Prognostic significance of positive axillary lymph node matastases and extracapsular extension in T1 to T3 breast cancer

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Background: Extracapsular extension (ECE) of axillary metastases has the importance as a risk factor for recurrence. Poorer survival in breast cancer has been suggested, but its prognostic value has not been uniformly confirmed.

Methods: From January 2000 to December 2007, 421 breast cancer patients operated on at the Department of General Surgery in General hospital "Sveti Vracevi" in Bijeljina. We selected 211 (50.1%) cases with pT1 to pT3 node-positive breast cancer. The prognostic significance of ECE of axillary metastases was evaluated with respect to disease-free survival, overall survival, and the patterns of disease recurrence. Such prognostic significance was then compared with that of other clinical and pathologic factors.

Results: 109 patients (25.8%) presented with ECE. 35 patients (32%) were identified as having three or less lymph nodes involved, 31 patients (28.4%) patients four to six, 23 patients (21.1%) seven to nine, and 18.5% patients ten or more nodes, respectively. With a median follow-up of 89 months, factors with independent prognostic value for disease-free survival by multivariate analysis included absence of estrogen receptors ($P < 0.005$), pN category ($P < 0.01$), presence of lymphovascular invasion (LVI; $P < 0.005$), and ECE ($P < 0.001$). An independent negative prognostic effect on overall survival was observed for absence of estrogen and progesterone receptors ($P < 0.05$), pN category ($P < 0.05$), and presence of LVI ($P < 0.005$) and ECE ($P < 0.001$).

Conclusions: ECE demonstrated a stronger statistical significance in predicting prognosis than the pN category and was also related to an increased risk of distant recurrences. We suggest that the decision on adjuvant therapy should consider the presence of ECE of axillary metastases and peritumoral LVI as indicators of high biological aggressiveness. Balancing the risks and benefits of irradiation, we continue to recommend that complete axillary irradiation is not routinely indicated after adequate axillary dissection.

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Economic impact of recurrence in postmenopausal women with breast cancer

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Background: Health care resource utilization among breast cancer patients is substantially high and patients who experience recurrent breast cancer require more costly care than patients who do not develop recurrent disease. Research has also shown that the cost associated with a distant recurrence is significantly greater than the cost associated with a contralateral or locoregional recurrence. Distant metastasis has also been shown to account for the greatest number of breast cancer recurrence events early in the course of the disease (2−3 years after surgery). In this study we evaluated the cost associated with breast cancer recurrence in postmenopausal women diagnosed with breast cancer between 1995 and 2005.

Method: This retrospective analysis was conducted using patients identified from the Henry Ford Health System, who were at least 45 year old at the time of diagnosis without a stage IV or unknown tumor. Patients had at least one year of continuous enrollment and received at least one of the following treatments: surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, or hormone therapy. Total health care costs incurred after distant, contralateral or locoregional recurrence were calculated up to one year after breast cancer recurrence or death and presented as mean cost per month.

Result: A total of 1,649 women were identified based on the inclusion criteria. The mean age was 61 years, and Stage I tumors were the most common (38%). The majority of the patients had surgery (99%). Other initial and subsequent treatments included radiation (71%), chemotherapy (27%), and hormone therapy (51%). Of the 232 patients who experienced a recurrence, distant recurrence (44%) was more common than contralateral (23%) or locoregional recurrence (34%). On average, patients with distant, contralateral, and locoregional recurrence incurred cost for approximately 7, 12, and 11 months, respectively. The mean cost per month associated with a distant recurrence ($37,969) was significantly greater that for contralateral ($10,934) recurrence or locoregional ($9,129) ($P < 0.0001$).

Conclusion: Distant metastasis is the primary cause for breast cancer deaths. This study finds that in postmenopausal women, the greatest number of breast cancer recurrences was distant, and these are associated with significantly higher cost of care compared to locoregional or contralateral recurrence.

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Clinical and biological characteristics of infiltrating ductal carcinoma and invasive lobular carcinoma of the breast

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Background: The roles of breast conservation versus radical surgery in the breast carcinoma treatment remain unclear. The aim of this study was to compare local recurrence, 5-year survival, and incidence of contralateral breast cancer in women with invasive lobular carcinoma to that in women with infiltrating ductal carcinoma.

Materials and Methods: Women with infiltrating ductal carcinoma (IDC) and invasive lobular breast carcinoma (ILC) were diagnosed and treated in Surgical clinic Nis between 1997 to 2001. The women were divided into groups based on their histology and treatment (breast conservation or modified radical mastectomy). The incidences of contralateral breast cancer, local recurrence, and 5-year survival were compared within each histologic group and treatment category.

Results: Invasive lobular cancer had 102 (8.80%) and 1057 (91.20%) had infiltrating ductal carcinoma. The 5-year survival rates were for ILC 65% and 70% for IDC, respectively ($p = 0.5$). The local recurrence rates were 2.8% and 4.3% for ILC treated with lumpectomy and axillary nodal dissection (LAND) and modified radical mastectomy (MRM), respectively, which were not significantly different from that obtained with IDC (LAND = 2.4%, MRM = 1.9%). The incidence of contralateral breast cancer during the observe period was 6.6% and 6.2% for ILC and IDC.

Conclusions: Invasive lobular carcinoma and infiltrating ductal carcinoma can be safely treated with breast conservation with no difference in local recurrence or survival. In the absence of a suspicious finding on clinical or radiologic examination, routine contralateral breast intervention is not recommended.

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Optimizing local control in locally advanced breast cancer: do we still need surgery?

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Background: Multimodality treatment is considered the standard treatment for patients with locally advanced breast cancer (LABC). This treatment usually consists of neo-adjuvant therapy followed by locoregional radiotherapy. Surgery is mainly used to remove residual disease after completion of neo-adjuvant therapy in order to ensure optimal local control. There is still debate however about the extent of surgery needed, since there is no survival benefit. Purpose of our study was to evaluate the disease outcome after neo-adjuvant therapy and locoregional radiotherapy in patients with locally advanced breast cancer, looking specifically at the extent of surgery.

Material and Methods: 109 patients with non-metastatic LABC (cT3−4N0−2) were retrospectively analyzed. All patients were treated between 1995 and 2005 in 3 different hospitals with neo-adjuvant therapy and locoregional radiotherapy ($\geqslant$50 Gy). Data about the surgical procedures and follow-up were collected.

Results: After neo-adjuvant treatment most patients ($N = 92$) underwent surgery. Surgical procedures consisted of any form of breast surgery with ($N = 66$) or without ($N = 26$) complete axillary lymph node dissection (ALND). With a median follow-up of 3.3 years the overall LRR-rate was