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Risk factors of lymphangitis in patients with lymphedema in Vajira hospital (Vajira-lymphatic team)

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Background: Lymphangitis is complication often found in lymphedema. It affects patients' quality of life and morbidity, cosmetic and functional ability. Therefore, there is a need to find potential risk that can lead to this complication.

Method: Study design is Retrospective study. Data of lymphedema patient's in Vajira Hospital during January 2007 until December 2018 were recorded.

Demographic data of patient such as sex, age, underlying diseases and BMI and Data of lymphedema symptoms such as site, onset, stages, causes and types were analyzed for risk factors by SPSS program.

Result: There were 140 patients: 12 males and 128 females; 78 infected while 62 not infected, who had received treatment from Vajira hospital during January 2007 to March 2018. Subjects' ages range around 60.09 ± 12.05 years, with body mass index about 28.73 ± 7.81 kg/m². To be more specific, there were 75 patients who had arm lymphedema while 65 had leg lymphedema. In addition, there are 11 who had primary lymphedema and 129 with secondary lymphedema. The most common complication of lymphedema is lymphangitis ($P < 0.001$). There was a higher chance for Campisi stage 3, 4 to get infected than stage 1, 2 ($P < 0.01$). Wound significantly risked to get infected ($P < 0.044$) in lymphedema patients. Body weight of patients who got infection was estimated at 74.26 kg which was higher than non-infected patients at 66.16 ± 14.67 kg ($P 0.037$).

Conclusion: It is suggested to treat lymphedema in initial states, before symptom reaches its late stage, to reduce the chance of lymphangitis. Besides, patients should be advised to beware of wound and immediately receive treatment for wound with lower rate of lymphangitis. Besides, patients with lymphedema with high weight are the major concern as they have more chance to get infected.