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Benefits of Multi-Teams Approach in Lymphedema Treatment at Vajira Hospital; a Case Report (Vajira-Lymphatic Team)

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Background: To report benefits of multi-teams approach in lymphedema treatment.

Methods: A 58-year-old female, known case endometrium cancer whom underwent TAH with BSO, pelvic lymph nodes dissection and radiotherapy. Postoperative 9 years, she was suffered from progressive swelling on the left lower extremity. Lymphatic scan shown decreasing left inguinal lymph node with dermal back flow. Vascular check-up done routinely; CTA and duplex ultrasonography shown left iliac vein stenosis; subsequently iliac vein stent was performed by vascular surgeon. Lower extremity vessels were marked with duplex ultrasonography anatomically one day before vascularized lymph node transfer. During MIS surgeons harvested right gastroepiploic lymph nodes laparoscopically; posterior tibial vessels were dissected under microscopic assisted by plastic surgeons simultaneously. Right gastroepiploic vessels and posterior tibial vessels were coapted under microscopic assisted.

Results: Right gastroepiploic lymph nodes transfer was successful without complications. Total operative time was 2 hours and 50 minutes; one hour for harvesting right gastroepiploic lymph nodes. Ischemic time was 40 minutes. Total range of hospital stay was 7 days. Neither venous congestion of flap nor other postoperative complications found.

Conclusions: Treatment of lymphedema patients may need multiple surgical teams which could reduce morbidity, operative time and complications. Preoperative extremities vessels evaluation by vascular surgeon could inform the diameter, quality and depth of vessels; helping in shorten the operative time. Incident of venous stenosis in secondary lymphedema at our institute is 3%; preoperative vascular evaluation and management could have benefits. Double team's intraoperative approach by MIS and plastic surgeons could reduce operative time and flap ischemic time which benefit for preserving flap function. Venous stent could decrease venous complications of flap. Multi-team approach in lymphedema treatment has advantages for patients.