

Peer Review File

Article information: <https://dx.doi.org/10.21037/abs-21-137>

Reviewer A

The authors here present a review of published literature addressing oncoplastic and reconstructive breast surgery in elderly women diagnosed with breast cancer who compose a significant and increasing proportion of newly diagnosed breast cancer patients. This is a timely and relevant topic for publication. The authors have raised three important key questions of great interest to breast surgeons and others caring for breast cancer patients.

I have a few comments and questions for the authors that mainly have to do with the overall structure of the article:

Comment 1: Overall the piece is written as opinion. I think it would be of greater value to state a thesis in the opening paragraphs to frame your work such as stating the problem, then stating the objective of your work as a hypothesis rather than jumping to the statement that “Chronologic age alone should not...” Perhaps stating that this is an understudied area and your aim was to present the data we do have, identify knowledge gaps for future study and suggest a framework for considering oncoplastics and breast reconstruction in current clinical practice pending more data.

Reply 1: We completely understand the reviewers comment although the proposal from the editor was to write an opinion essay. We slightly modified the sentence as suggested

Comment 2: Please create a methods section and address the methods you used for identifying the relevant literature with which to address the topic.

Reply 2: Within the structure of an opinion essay the classic section of methods is usually not included.

Comment 3: Page 5, paragraph 3. One sentence in this paragraph as written. Please summarize the key points of the data in Table 1 here.

Comment 4: Page 5, oncoplastics section. Again here the text doesn't provide the reader with factual data from your review.

Reply 3/4: We understand the reviewers point but again the difference between a Narrative Review and an Opinion essay. Tables were included just to document the paucity and heterogeneity of data.

Comment 5: Consider adding something about potential benefits for oncoplastics being could be done in many cases without general anesthesia.

Reply 5: Although a very interesting idea is speculative and without supporting data, specially in this age group.

Comment 6: Minor comments: abstract – consider change adjective “expressive” to increasing or similar as I think they are saying this is a growing number of patients;

abstract – consider modifying statement on RCT for oncoplastics and reconstruction as these are such accepted options for breast cancer care in the present day that it would be impossible to ethically construct such a trial – not that the numbers of patients are too small although even if ethical concerns were not an issue, co-morbidities would be challenging to assess and account for.

Reply 6: Changed according to reviewers suggestion

It is not likely that randomized controlled trials will happen in this age group not only due to ethical concerns (as oncoplastic surgery and post mastectomy reconstruction are already standard of care in other age groups) but also to the difficulties in obtaining meaningful numbers. However, well designed prospective cohorts can be a valuable alternative to the scarce available retrospective evidence (Page 3)

Comment 7: Introduction – Modify statement sentence 1 suggesting that effective treatments for breast cancer increase the incidence of breast cancer. I would think this is not factually true.

Reply 7: We modified the sentence to avoid an ambiguous meaning.

Breast cancer incidence has been steadily increasing mainly in high income countries as is life expectancy. The majority of newly diagnosed breast cancer cases will occur in post-menopausal women with an increasing number being diagnosed in older ages (Page 2)

Comment 8: Overall the authors have selected a great topic, reviewed a lot of material and have raised some great ideas and with some reformatting this work has the potential to be a meaningful publication. Suggest reframing as partially outlined above and summarized below:

- a. State thesis/hypothesis and background
- b. Describe methods
- c. Within each category start with what is known based on your literature review, describe knowledge gaps, suggest what needs to be studied and a framework for current clinical practice (for each Subheading)

Reply 8: We thank the reviewer for the suggestions although they are pertinent in the context of a narrative review. In an opinion essay the structure is slightly different and much dependent on authors decision

Reviewer B

The manuscript presents a summary of data regarding oncoplastic and reconstruction in the older adult population.

Comment 1: The main concern I have is the readability. I had a very hard time understanding the objective of each section. The authors have multiple paragraphs made of one sentence that goes on about one topic, and then goes to the other. This makes understanding the topics too difficult. I recommend the authors revise the manuscript to make it organized. The data should be synthesized and compared.

Reply 1: We understand the reviewers view but an opinion essay is free in its structure. The methodology is different from a classic narrative review. Authors should present their opinion according to the most relevant published literature

Comment 2: The methodology of this manuscript is lacking. Was this a scoping review or a narrative review. Please provide methodology.

Reply 2: Again the methodology in an opinion essay is not described in the same way as in other papers.

Comment 3: The authors should have a section about patient reported outcomes and qualitative studies that have looked at oncoplastic or reconstruction in older women. Why is not being offered? How do women feel about the cosmetic result.

Reply 3: There is a section specifically related to the topic intitled “Patient reported outcomes in Oncoplastic and Reconstructive Breast Surgery”

Comment 4: I would also suggest the authors provide a concise recommendation about what the literature shows about who to offer this treatment. A lot of these studies are in highly selected women. But who are they? What are their tumours like?

Reply 4: Although the question the reviewer poses is very pertinent unfortunately there is no answer and the truth cannot be extracted from the published review papers.