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## Sentinel lymph node biopsy in breast cancer using methylene blue dye: Experience at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital Lahore

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**Background:** Sentinel lymph node biopsy is used widely for the management of breast cancer. Axillary lymph node involvement is a very good prognostic indicator in breast cancer. It is the first node draining the primary tumor and is the first node to be involved by the cancer.

**Objectives:** The purpose of this study was to find out the accuracy, sensitivity and specificity of this procedure in our setting by using methylene blue dye.

Study Design: Case series.

Duration: From February 2017 to December 2017 at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital Lahore.

Sampling: Purposive simple random technique.

**Methods:** Forty two (42) patients were selected with diagnosis of breast carcinoma and impalpable axillary nodes clinically. Sentinel lymph node biopsy was performed by using 01% methylene blue dye in subareolar region followed by axillary clearance with mastectomy at the same time. The blue stained lymph node and the breast tissue with axillary dissection was sent for histopathology.

**Results:** Out of 42 patients true positive results were in 39 cases i.e. metastasis detected in 16 cases in sentinel node and so in the axillary nodes, in 33 patients no metastasis found in sentinel as well as in axillary nodes, only in 3 cases false negative results seen there were no false positive. Sensitivity was 92% and specificity 99%.

**Conclusion:** Sentinel lymph node biopsy using methylene blue dye is a safe, feasible and cost effective procedure to identify the sentinel lymph node in patients of breast cancer with impalpable axillary nodes. In our study this technique is proved to be effective in staining the sentinel lymph node by which unnecessary axillary dissection can be avoided in breast cancer surgery.