

**Title:**

Lymphoedema education- analysing the data to achieve best practice in post breast surgery multidisciplinary care

**Abstract:**

Lymphoedema management continues to be one of the key services offered by Bendigo Health Outpatient Rehabilitation Services.

In more recent times cancer services within Bendigo Health have undergone significant advances with the development of a specific cancer co-ordinator position, and the provision of a Peter Mac Radiotherapy Unit on-site.

These services have created an increase in the number of referrals for lymphoedema management, resulting in the development of the lymphoedema group education program. As cancer services have developed it has now become common practice for women and men who have had breast surgery in Bendigo to be referred to us for education, monitoring and treatment.

Since 2001 groups of 4-5 women have attended these 2.5 hour sessions which incorporate education regarding the lymphatic system, managing the risk of developing lymphoedema, appropriate exercises, as well as issues regarding pacing, relaxation, survivorship issues and finally volumetric measures. Bio-impedance and BMI data has been included since 2008. These qualitative measures have been repeated at regular review appointments, mapping the volume changes and development of lymphoedema within this population. Sentinel lymph node biopsy became standard practice amongst surgeons at Bendigo Health in 2008 taking over from the initial standard line treatment of axillary dissection.

This paper will present data which compares the rates of lymphoedema based upon type of surgery, adjuvant treatment, management techniques utilised within the clinic, as well as feedback data from the education program. It will also present proposed changes to the procedures for collating relevant data within the clinic.