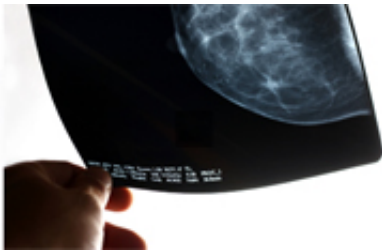


Complication rates low with mastectomy, breast reconstruction: study

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But there was slightly higher risk of complications with double mastectomy, researchers added.

(HealthDay)—Complications are rare among breast cancer patients who undergo mastectomy and reconstruction, a new study indicates.

However, the researchers did find that a [double mastectomy](#) was associated with a slightly higher risk for certain complications than a single [mastectomy](#).

The study included more than 18,000 [breast cancer patients](#) who had a single (64 percent) or a double mastectomy with [breast reconstruction](#) and were followed for 30 days after surgery.

Most of the women received implant-based breast reconstruction, rather than autologous reconstruction, where tissue from other parts of the body is used to reconstruct the breast.

The overall rate of complications was 5.3 percent, according to the study, which is to be presented Tuesday at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Breast Cancer Symposium in San Francisco.

"Women choose surgery on their cancer-free breast for lots of different reasons, ranging from a desire to achieve a more symmetric look after surgery to fear of cancer coming back. Our findings show that both unilateral and bilateral procedures are safe overall, but bilateral mastectomy is associated with higher risks for certain complications," study author Dr. Mark Sisco, a clinical assistant professor of surgery at the University of Chicago School of Medicine, said in an ASCO news release.

"These results are reassuring for women who are considering mastectomy with reconstruction and provide additional information that may weigh in their choice of surgery," he added.

Among women with implant-based reconstruction, double mastectomy patients had higher rates of implant loss compared to single mastectomy patients (1 percent vs. 0.7 percent) and were more likely to require a second [surgery](#) within 30 days than single mastectomy patients (7.6 percent vs. 6.8 percent).

Double mastectomy patients also had higher rates of blood transfusion due to bleeding-related complications, regardless of type of breast reconstruction.

Among those who had autologous reconstruction, transfusion rates were 3.4 percent for single mastectomy and 7.9 percent for double mastectomy. Among those who had implant-based reconstruction, transfusion rates were 0.3 percent for single mastectomy and 0.8 percent for double mastectomy.

Double mastectomy led to longer hospital stays than single mastectomy—one day vs. two days for implant-based reconstruction, and four days vs. five days for autologous [reconstruction](#).

The double and single mastectomy patients had similar low rates of medical [complications](#) such as pneumonia and heart problems.

Research presented at medical meetings is considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

More information: The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more about [mastectomy](#).

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