Oncoplastic Surgery

Oncoplastic breast surgery is a relatively new term in breast cancer treatment originating only about 10 years ago. Traditionally, general surgeons were responsible for managing breast cancer and plastic surgeons were in charge of the reconstructive surgery. Typically, each had little insight into the objectives of the other. The goal is to provide treatment that is as effective as mastectomy while preserving the patients breast thereby pleasing the patient with her body image resulting in improved satisfaction.

Although one surgeon may be trained in both oncologic and reconstructive surgery, two specialists who work together in a multidisciplinary approach typically share the responsibility to address the oncologic need as well as obtain the best aesthetic result for each patient. With better survival rates, the development of a cosmetically pleasing result and its associated improvement in quality of life becomes even more important.

Oncoplastic surgery originated with the concept of avoiding mastectomy by providing wide local excision coupled with partial breast reconstruction. The approach of oncoplastic surgery is to vary traditional breast cancer surgery, such as modifying the traditional incisions with circumareolar or periareolar incisions, or even skin sparing mastectomy when oncologically appropriate to obtain more aesthetic results without compromising the oncologic procedure. In addition using a full range of reconstructive techniques including classical mammoplasty techniques, use of distant flap for partial reconstruction and atypical flaps from breast tissue. Furthermore, oncoplastic surgery includes correction of the contra-lateral breast for any asymmetry such as breast implants, reduction or mastopexy.

Patients who are typically offered oncoplastic surgery are those with tumors in the lower quadrants since lumpectomy alone usually results in a poor cosmetic result. In addition, patients who have a high tumor/ breast volume ratio in any location may be candidates as well. In addition, some have even proposed that oncoplastic surgery enhances the oncologic surgery by allowing larger margins than traditional breast conserving therapy.

References: