Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (NOS)

1. STUDY TYPE:

□ Case control
□ Cohort

CASE CONTROL

Selection

2. Is the case definition adequate?

□ Yes, with independent validation (e.g. lymphedema determined by lymphscintigraphy)
□ Yes, e.g. record linkage or based on self reports
□ No description

3. Representativeness of the cases (how were cases selected)

□ Consecutive or obviously representative series of cases
□ Potential for selection biases or not stated

4. Selection of Controls

□ Community controls
□ Hospital controls
□ No description

5. Definition of Controls

□ No history of disease (endpoint)
□ No description of source

Comparability

6. Comparability of cases and controls on the basis of the design or analysis

□ Study controls for stage of lymphedema
□ Study controls time of onset of lymphedema

Exposure

7. Ascertainment of exposure

□ Secure record (e.g. surgical record/research records)
□ Structured interview where interviewer blind to case/control status
□ Interviewer not blinded to case/control status
□ Written self report of medical record only
□ No description

8. Same method of ascertainment for cases and controls

□ Yes
□ No

9. Non-Response rate (dropouts)

□ Same rate for both groups
□ Non respondents described
□ Rate different and no designation (description)

COHORT STUDIES

Selection

10. Representativeness of the exposed cohort

□ Truly representative of the average secondary lymphedema patient in the community
□ Somewhat representative of the average secondary lymphedema patient in the community
□ Selected group of users e.g. nurses, volunteers
□ No description of the derivation of the cohort

11. Selection of the nonexposed cohort

□ Drawn from the same community as the exposed cohort
□ Drawn from a different source
□ No description of the derivation of the non exposed cohort

12. Ascertainment of exposure

□ Secure record (e.g. surgical records/clinical records)
□ Structured interview
□ Written self report
□ No description

13. Demonstration that outcome of interest was not present at start of study

□ Yes
□ No

Comparability

14. Comparability of cohorts on the basis of the design or analysis

□ Study controls for stage of lymphedema
□ Study controls for time of onset of lymphedema

Outcome

15. Assessment of outcome

□ Independent blind assessment
□ Record linkage (some other objective measure not encompassed by "independent blind assignment" see above)
□ Self report
□ No description

16. Was follow-up long enough for outcomes to occur

□ Yes (6 weeks +)
□ No (less than 6 weeks)

17. Adequacy of follow up of cohorts

□ Complete follow up – all subjects accounted for
□ Subjects lost to follow up unlikely to introduce bias – small number lost (> 80%follow up), or description provided of those lost
□ Follow up rate < 80% and no description of those lost
□ No statement