Premise: Pt doesn’t want radiotherapy strongly - mastectomy

**Patient Scenario**

**Dr. Ng:** Good morning, Ms. Lim. Thank you for coming in today. How are you feeling?

**Ms. Lim:** Good morning, Dr. Ng. I’ve been feeling very anxious about my treatment. I just want to get this over with, but I’m really against radiotherapy.

**Dr. Ng:** I understand. Radiotherapy is an important part of treatment after a lumpectomy, but if you’re strongly against it, we can explore other options. Can you share what concerns you the most about radiotherapy?

**Ms. Lim:** I’ve read about the side effects, like skin burns and fatigue. I don’t think I can handle going through weeks of treatment after surgery. I just want a one-time treatment and be done with it.

**Dr. Ng:** That’s completely understandable. If avoiding radiotherapy is your priority, then a mastectomy would be a better option for you. By removing the entire breast, we significantly reduce the need for post-surgical radiotherapy, especially if your lymph nodes are not involved.

**Ms. Lim:** I see. I was hoping to keep my breast, but I really don’t want radiation. I guess mastectomy is the better choice for me.

**Dr. Ng:** That’s a reasonable decision given your preference. Would you like to discuss reconstruction, or would you prefer to go flat?

**Ms. Lim:** I thought about reconstruction, but I don’t think I want another major surgery. I think I’d rather go flat and move on.

**Dr. Ng:** That makes sense. A simple mastectomy without reconstruction is a straightforward surgery with a shorter recovery than a mastectomy with reconstruction. You won’t have to undergo additional procedures, and we can focus on your recovery and follow-up care.

**Ms. Lim:** That sounds like what I want. I feel better now that I have a clear plan.

**Dr. Ng:** I’m glad to hear that. We’ll discuss the details of the surgery and what to expect, and we’ll plan for the next steps together.

### **Decisional Tool: Pros and Cons of Each Modality**

#### **Lumpectomy + Radiotherapy**

✅ **Pros:**

* **Breast Conservation:** Preserves the natural breast, which may be important for some women.
* **Less Extensive Surgery:** Shorter recovery time compared to mastectomy, no drain needed

❌ **Cons:**

* **Requires Radiotherapy:** Essential after lumpectomy to lower recurrence risk, which Ms. Lim strongly wants to avoid.
* **Multiple Hospital Visits:** Radiotherapy involves several weeks of treatment, which may be inconvenient.
* **Risk of Additional Surgery:** If margins are not clear, a second surgery may be needed.

#### **Mastectomy Without Reconstruction**

✅ **Pros:**

* **Avoids Radiotherapy in Most Cases:** Since the entire breast is removed, radiation therapy is usually not required unless lymph nodes are involved.
* **Lower Recurrence Risk:** Removes more breast tissue, reducing the risk of local recurrence.
* **One-Time Treatment:** No need for prolonged post-surgical treatment like radiotherapy.

❌ **Cons:**

* **Longer Initial Recovery:** Mastectomy is a more extensive surgery than lumpectomy, drain is needed, which needs to be removed at a subsequent visit.
* **Permanent Breast Removal:** May have emotional and psychological impacts.
* **No Breast Shape Preservation:** If opting against reconstruction, there will be a permanent change in body image.

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