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Educational abstract

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Correlation of preoperative ultrasound and mammographic measurement of malignant breast masses with operative histology

M Mansi[1], A Leaver[2], L McLean[2], B Kaye[2]
[1]School of Medicine, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK; [2]Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

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Introduction Preoperative assessment of breast cancer patients is by physical examination, mammography and ultrasound. Mammography and ultrasound measurements inform treatment regimes and prognostic estimates. Our aim was to determine the accuracy of imaging measurement of malignant breast masses in our Trust.
Methods Screening and symptomatic women with breast cancer who had surgery between October 2008 and May 2009 were identified from multidisciplinary team records. The largest dimension of abnormal tissue/breast mass on any projection/probe orientation was documented for mammography and/or ultrasound. Measurements were compared with the largest tumour dimension on final histological analysis of excised tumour.
Results Records were available for 100 patients with invasive breast cancer (66% (66/100) invasive without DCIS, 34% (34/100) invasive with DCIS). Overall size of the malignancy measured at both mammography and ultrasound correlated with histological tumour size (r = 0.54 and r = 0.56, respectively). This correlation was less high for overall size of malignancy when associated with DCIS. Mammography with DCIS (r = 0.37) versus mammography without DCIS (r = 0.77); ultrasound with DCIS (r = 0.52) versus r = 0.68 for invasive cancers without DCIS. Multiple regression analysis showed that the combination of mammogram and ultrasound is an effective means of estimating size of malignancy in the presence of a mass (r^2 = 0.67).
Conclusions The combination of mammography and ultrasound is an effective means of predicting tumour size; it is more accurate for tumours without DCIS. There is a tendency towards size underestimation, more so for ultrasound than mammography.

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What is involved in a comprehensive breast MRI service? Implications for service provision

ND Forester, N Sharma, BJG Dall
Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, Leeds, UK

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Introduction MRI as an adjunct to triple assessment is well established, but often identifies additional lesions within the breast necessitating further characterisation. This study addresses the additional investigations generated by MRI.
Methods A retrospective review of the MRI database between 2006 and 2009 identifying patients requiring investigations post MRI.
Results Over 4 years, 1,119 MRIs were performed on 717 patients, with 102 recalled for second-look ultrasound. Three patients were lost to follow-up. A total 124 incidental lesions were identified on MRI. Ultrasound identified 68 lesions, with definitive diagnosis following core biopsy/FNAC (62), surgery (two) core biopsy + repeat MRI (one) and MRI biopsy (three). Twenty-two lesions not identified by USS were assessed with X-ray-guided biopsy (two), MRI biopsy (13), interval MRI (five) or surgery (two). Nineteen MRI lesions following normal ultrasound had routine follow-up. Fifteen lesions (12 patients) did not have follow-up USS, as recommended following MDT discussion. Sixty lesions (44 patients) were malignant; MRI identified a primary in four patients presenting with lymphadenopathy and in 39 patients identified additional foci that changed management. Malignant lesions were identified on US biopsy/FNAC (38), X-ray-guided biopsy (one), MRI biopsy (seven) and surgery (14).
Conclusions MRI identifies additional foci in 14% of patients. Malignant lesions will be identified in 43% of patients recalled. Comparison with 2005 data identifies a decreased recall rate and an increased cancer detection rate. Fifty per cent of additional lesions identified by MRI are malignant, of which 77% were confirmed preoperatively. Provision of a comprehensive breast MRI service must consider the resources needed to deliver the additional diagnostic investigations required.

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An audit of pain in ultrasound-guided breast core biopsy

P Whelehan, L Baker, A Evans
University of Dundee, UK

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Introduction We audited pain from ultrasound-guided core biopsies (CB) for routine service quality monitoring, to provide baseline data against which to compare new techniques, and to help us develop methodological expertise in pain assessment. Although there is no standard against which to audit CB pain, published comparators are available.
Methods Two self-report pain scales were administered to 64 female patients immediately after ultrasound-guided 14G CB under local anaesthesia. Although we aimed for consecutive patients, some were de-selected by staff on grounds of apparently high levels of cancer anxiety. The scales were a 100 mm visual analogue scale (VAS) and a four-category verbal rating scale (VRS) – None, Mild, Moderate, Severe. Responses were anonymous and no attempt was made to collect data on relevant variables. VAS scores were compared between VRS categories using the Mann–Whitney U test.
Results Sixty questionnaires were adequate for analysis. VAS scores were not normally distributed and ranged from 0 to 80, median 7.5, interquartile range 15 (mean 15.6 ± SD 22.3). The paired VAS and VRS results correlated well and the median VAS scores for the different VRS categories demonstrated clear distinctions between categories (P <0.001).
Conclusions The correlation between VAS scores and VRS categories is evidence supporting the validity of the scales. Our overall mean VAS score was lower than the most comparable values in the literature. We will use our audit to illustrate a discussion of the principles, including scale selection, and the pitfalls of pain assessment in relation to existing relevant literature.

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Breast cancer screening in the over 70s

D Eddy[1], L Edwards[2], K Gower-Thomas[2]
[1]Welsh School of Medicine, Cardiff, UK; [2]Breast Test Wales, Cardiff, UK

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Introduction Routine invitation for breast screening currently ceases in Wales over the age of 70 despite the incidence of breast cancer remaining high in this group. Attendance for screening aged over 70 is low compared with the invited population, often attributed to lack of awareness of eligibility and how to access screening. If screening is to be extended, the motivation to attend and outcomes need to be understood.
Methods This audit of prospectively collected data from Breast Test Wales Screening (South East Wales) identified all women over 70 years who attended. In those where cancers were detected, age, pathological data, previous screening history, family history, clinically palpability and breast symptoms were recorded.
Results A total of 5,736 women attended aged 71 to 92 years in a 3-year screening round (1 April 2006 to 31 March 2009) with numbers attending decreasing with higher age. In total, 295 (5.1%) were recalled to assessment and 81 (1.4%) were diagnosed with cancer. A total of 61.5% of the cancers were grade 2, 77% <20 mm and 84% node-negative. The majority had an excellent or good Nottingham Prognostic Index, mirroring national data for the younger invited population. Of those diagnosed with cancer, 61.6% had