

Case Report

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Epidermal Cysts of the Breast in a Developing Community



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Abstract

Only a few cases of epidermal cysts of the breast have been reported in the literature. The lesion is characterized by a cyst containing keratinous matter and lined by squamous cells. Therefore, a few examples are presented from a developing community on account of the construction of a histopathology data pool that was hailed to be advantageous in epidemiological analysis. Three local cases were found in 2 females and one male between 22 and 60 years; the squamous lining may be partly lost; abscess may be formed with associated cellulitis of the adjoining fat, and foreign body giant cells may appear.

Keywords: Breast; Swelling; Cyst; Keratin; Inflammation

Introduction

The epidermal cyst is a benign lesion that forms commonly in parts of the body [1]. In the experience of the author among the Ibo/Igbo ethnic group [2], the vulva was the commonest site. This was attributed to the ancient practice of circumcision [3].

In contrast, this was scarcely found in the circumcised male [4]. In particular, the chance of coming across the case of a German 52-year-old woman, whose breast excision was reported [5], led to the search of my histopathology data pool which was established in 1970. Three breast cases were found (Table 1).

Table 1: Epidemiological data on of epidermal cysts of the breast.

S/No.	Lab No.	Age (yr)	Side	Duration (yr)	Diagnosis	Size (cm)
1	UH 1816/87	34	L	2	Fibroadenoma	2
2	UH 2412/88	41	R	1	Tumor	6
3	UH 3228/88	42	L	2	Fibroma	2.5
4	UH 2008/89	23	R	1/52	Fibroadenoma	1
5	M 82/91	42	L	-	Dysplasia	-
6	920269	30	L	1	Duct ectasia	1.0
7	9205139	34	L	1	Fibroadenoma	3
8	9404166	57	L	10	Naevus	2
9	9501178	60	R	1	Fibroadenoma	2
10	940886	38	L	8	Papilloma	0.5
11	950718	60	L	20	Actinomycosis	7
12	97113	30	L	6	Sebaceous cyst	1
13	990838	36	R	1	Fibroma	0.5
14	000410	60	L	6/12	Cyst	1
15	010448	30	R	3/12	Fibroadenoma	0.5

16	030419	30	L	1	Sebaceous cyst	1
17	041137	55	R	1	Furunculosis	2
18	070820	59	R	-	Naevus	1
19	090661	40	R	1	Furunculosis	2
20	090643	59	R	Many	Birthmark	1
21	090812	57	L	-	Fibroadenoma	2
22	090643	44	L	2	Fibroadenoma	2

Discussion

The German case reported by Claudia and associates [5] restimulated my interest in this lesion. This was also aided by the vision of a Birmingham (UK) group which stressed that building a histopathology data pool expedites epidemiological analysis [6]. Although the epidermal cysts found in some communities led to much discomfort in modern times [7], my study of the local histopathology data pool has shown that the community is becoming aware of the health education message [8]. Other areas are worthy of study such as in ophthalmology [9]. Interestingly, the 2:1 ratio found above is the same as in an Indian series [9]. Due to the rarity in the breast, 3 cases only were reported from India [10]. Size may lead to difficulty in diagnosis as in the UK [11]. A clinical and radiological dilemma was resolved by Fine Needle Aspiration [12].

On their part, workers in Iran [13] and Italy [14] laid stress on the considerable numbers obtained through world-wide search of the English literature! In this group is the review published by Paliotta and partners [15]. Interestingly, this group affirmed that elliptical excision is the preferred treatment for this lesion when met in the breast.

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