

Title: Is Younger Better?

Objective: To highlight a case of breast cancer in a young female

Introduction: Breast cancer is one of the most commonly diagnosed cancer in females however, approximately 7% of these cases occur in women less than 40 years. The occurrence of breast cancer at a young age is quite arduous as it is fraught with various diagnostic and management challenges. This report illustrates a case of breast cancer in a young woman.

Case summary: A 28 year old female complained of a left breast lump for 1 year which progressively increased in size. Furthermore, she described an associated bilateral, cream coloured nipple discharge. Clinical examination demonstrated a 4cm x 3cm hard, irregularly shaped mass in the upper outer quadrant of the left breast and a single palpable left axillary lymph node. Ultrasound scan and mammography revealed a 2.3 cm x 1.5cm x 1.4cm heterogeneous, hypo echoic, avascular mass with irregular margins at the 2 o' clock position of the left breast and 3cm x 2.4cm spiculated asymmetry in the upper quadrant of the left breast respectively. A core biopsy described features suggestive of infiltrating ductal carcinoma. The patient was counselled extensively about her diagnosis and need for multi disciplinary team approach. She is currently awaiting bilateral mastectomy followed by immediate breast reconstruction pending BRCA1/BRCA2 gene status.

Discussion: Breast cancer diagnosed in this subgroup, usually presents at a more advanced stage of disease and are found to harbour more aggressive subtypes. Treatment strategies require a multi disciplinary team and are individualised since special factors including infertility, pregnancy, bone health, genetic syndromes and psychosocial issues are considered.

Conclusion: Breast cancer in young females is a relatively uncommon condition however based on its complexity, an early multi disciplinary approach is required to significantly improve outcomes.