

Idiopathic granulomatous mastitis in a single centre Breast unit in Durban, South Africa

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Abstract

Background and aims. Idiopathic lobular granulomatous mastitis (ILGM) is a rare chronic inflammatory of the breast. The clinical and radiologic presentation is similar to that of breast carcinoma, and is reported to occur in young parous females. Diagnosis and treatment can be challenging. This retrospective chart review aims to document our local experience with this condition.

Methods. Data regarding seven patients who were treated for ILGM over from 2012 to 2018 were analysed from a public hospital single centre breast unit in Durban, South Africa. All files of patients treated with granulomatous mastitis were reviewed. Only patients with confirmed features of non-necrotizing granulomatous inflammation of the breast were included for analysis. Demographic, clinical presentation, investigative and treatment data was captured and analysed.

Results. All seven patients presented with a breast lump while three presented with mastalgia, and one presented with a nipple discharge. Five patients had left sided disease, one patient had bilateral disease, and one had right sided disease. The duration for symptoms at presentation ranged from 2-10 months. All the patients were pre-menopausal, and only two were on oral contraception (OC) at the time of presentation. Three patients had mammograms, with one patient having a focal opacity, one having an asymmetrical density, and one having no focal mass, but increased density of the breast. All seven patients were examined with ultrasound where both heterogenous and hypoechoic lesions were noted as well as architectural distortion with varying overlap of findings. All patients were treated with steroids until resolution. The mean treatment duration was 6.4 months. One patient had two episodes of recurrence that were treated with steroid therapy.

Conclusions. ILGM is a rare breast condition that presents a diagnostic and treatment challenge. Appropriate investigation and histopathological assessment is paramount to avoid unnecessary surgery and to ensure good treatment outcomes.