Cheatle-Cutler's Disease of the Breast (Plasma Cell Mastitis): Kenawi's Clinical Categorization

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Abstract

Plasma-cell Mastitis (Cheatle-Cutler's Disease of the Breast) is a rare but relatively important disease of the female breast. Because of its rarity it is poorly understood. It was first named by Cheatle and Cutler in their book on 'Tumors of the Breast' (1). Adair was the first to call attention to its importance (2). These lesions may recur in the same or opposite breast. Their recurrence may take the original or a different form (e.g. a lobular plasma cell mastitis, described below, may recur as a contiguous multi-lobar plasma cell mastitis and vice versa). It may affect one breast and later appear in the opposite breast. Bilateral involvement has been reported (3). This lesion derives its importance from the fact that it has been repeatedly mistaken for breast carcinoma and has been treated as such (3,4). This mistake is liable to repeatedly occur again if frozen section biopsy of breast masses is neglected. Many cases previously designated as plasma cell mastitis probably represent a stage in the evolution of duct ectasia (5). I therefore report my clinical experience over a period of 43 years on this subject in the hope that clinical awareness will prohibit iatrogenic liabilities and errors.