

# FIBROADENOMA OF VULVA

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FUNCTIONING BREAST TISSUE is located in the vulva of certain aquatic mammals (whales, dolphins, porpoises) and in woman the presence of breast-like tissue in this region is a rare congenital anomaly. We report one such lesion of the vulva thought clinically to be a cyst which on examination showed a marked resemblance to fibroadenoma of the mammary gland.

## REPORT OF CASE

A 36 year old Chinese female L.K.E. was seen at the Luke Clinic, Penang, on 25.5.77 complaining of a lump at the vulva of two year duration. It was uncomfortable but not painful and slowly increased in size.

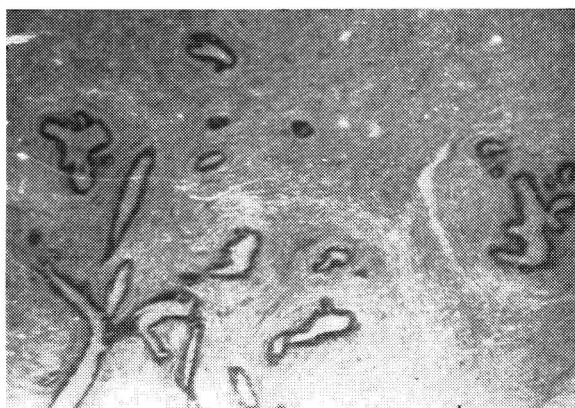
There was no history of pelvic or genital infection.

Physical examination revealed a non-tender and freely movable oval lump located just under the skin of the left labia majus. It was excised and "shelled out" of the tissue without difficulty, and the patient made an uneventful recovery.

**Pathological findings:-** Gross examination revealed a well circumscribed, oval and nodular, rubbery firm lump, measuring  $1.8 \times 1.5 \times 1.5$  cm. It was apparently encapsulated and its external surface which was smooth and lobulated was covered by an elliptical piece of skin tissue. The cut section was solid and uniformly whitish grey in appearance.

Microscopic sections showed a sharply delimited tumour composed of breast-like tissue in which there was benign proliferation of both the epithelial

and the fibrous connective tissue elements in varying amounts. In some places the proliferation of the fibrous tissue was uniformly concentric in distribution in relationship to the epithelial structures which did not appear distorted. In other areas the overgrowth of the fibrous tissue lead to invaginate the epithelial components which appeared as compressed narrow spaces between the fibrous nodules. The covering skin was intact and unchanged.



**Section of tumour from perineum showing a fibroadenomatous appearance.**

The features resembled a simple fibroadenoma of the breast in which both the pericanalicular and intracanalicular patterns were represented.

## COMMENTS

As in all mammals the human breast develops in a primitive epidermal thickening known as the

mammary ridge or "milk line". This line runs from the axillary to the pubic region to end on the upper medial surface of the thigh. Thus from the embryologic point of view supernumerary breast structures may be found at any point along this line. This anomaly frequently occurs below the breasts and sometimes in the axilla. It is only rarely encountered in the vulva, and its presence is explainable in this developmental band.

Vulva breasts are capable of behaving in the same way as normally situated breasts and neoplastic change can supervene. Both fibroadenoma (Fisher, 1947; Siegler and Gordon, 1951) and adenocarcinoma (Hendrix and Behrman, 1956) have been reported.

Although vulval tumours containing breast-like epithelium suggest an origin in rudimentary breast tissue the probability of these having arisen in the epithelium of the vulval apocrine glands has also been reported (Burger and Marcuse, 1954). They describe two cases of intracystic fibroadenoma in the vulva and regard the lesions as a variant of apocrine gland hidradenoma in which the stromal element predominates.

Clinically, these tumours are benign and the symptoms encountered are those of local tumour. They do not recur unless incompletely excised.

## SUMMARY

Supernumerary mammary glands are chiefly found between the axilla and groin. This anomaly is frequently found below the breasts or in the axilla and the vulva is rarely the seat of this malformation.

We report one lesion of the vulva clinically thought to be a cyst but microscopic examination showed a tumour resembling fibroadenoma of the breast.

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