

**MORPHOLOGICAL SPECTRUM OF FNAC BREAST IN TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL - A
RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE OBSERVATIONAL STUDY**

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Abstract - Introduction : Fine needle aspiration cytology (FNAC) is first line investigation in diagnosing breast lesions , however histopathology is the gold standard . FNAC is a significant component of the "Triple approach" for pre operative diagnosis of breast lumps, the other two being clinical assessment and radiological imaging. The diagnostic accuracy is close to 100% when all three modalities favour a benign or malignant diagnosis . The aim of the study is to find out the proportion of various breast lesions as diagnosed by Fine needle aspiration study AIM : The primary objective is to find out proportion of various breast lesions as diagnosed on FNAC breast . The secondary objective are age wise distribution of various breast disease and to evaluate site of distribution of various breast diseases Material and method : • A prospective and retrospective observational study was conducted involving all the female patient of age group 15-75 years with palpable lump in breast. FNAC slides were examined and reported by two independent pathologists of at least assistant professor rank and lesions were categorized according to IAC into five categories as C1-C5. RESULT: • Total of 231 cases were studied, out of these 148 (64.07%) cases were

benign , 52 (22.51 %) cases were found malignant , 8 (3.46 %) cases were suspicious for malignant , 2 (0.87 %) cases were atypical and insufficient sample were 20 (8.66 %) . Most common benign lesion was fibroadenoma 82 (55.41 %) cases , followed by fibrocystic disease 23 (15.54 %) cases . Mostly lesions were unilateral 224 (96.97 %) cases . Most common quadrant of lesion was upper outer 72 (31.17 %) cases . CONCLUSION • FNAC is a rapid , cheap and effective method for primary categorization of palpable breast lesions . Most common breast lesions are benign than malignant lesions . Fibroadenoma is most common benign breast lesion followed by fibrocystic disease and most common malignant lesion was IDC . Maximum no. of lesions in age group of 21-30 years

INTRODUCTION

Cancer of the breast ranks as the second most prevalent form of cancer among women. The rise in breast cancer cases is associated with delayed marriage, childbirth at an advanced age, shorter durations of breastfeeding, and nulliparity or low parity. From a clinical perspective, breast disorders manifest with palpable lumps in the breast or nipple discharge. The presence of a breast mass, whether benign or malignant, induces anxiety in the patient and her family members.¹

Breast lumps represent a significant proportion of cases in surgical practice, necessitating the differentiation between benign and malignant lesions prior to initiating definitive treatment.²

According to the International Academy of Cytology (IAC) classification, the various categories of breast lesions are classified as C1-C5 (insufficient, benign, atypical, suspicious of malignancy, and malignant lesions).³ Included in the benign category are fibrocystic disease,

granulomatous mastitis, lactational mastitis, lobular/ductal hyperplasia, fat necrosis, and lipoma.⁴ The malignant category encompasses breast carcinomas, with infiltrating ductal carcinoma of the breast being the most common malignant breast lesion. The primary manifestation of breast disease is often a palpable mass, although clinical examination alone may not definitively determine whether a suspicious lump is benign or malignant.² Breast carcinoma

ranks among the most prevalent cancers in women and stands as one of the leading causes of death among women globally.⁵

Breast carcinoma stands as the most prevalent malignant tumor and the primary cause of cancer-related deaths in women, with over 1,000,000 cases reported worldwide annually.⁶

The diagnostic protocol for breast cancer involves the "Triple test," comprising clinical examination, mammography, and fine needle aspiration cytology (FNAC).⁸ FNAC, a key element of the "triple test," serves as a valuable approach for assessing breast lumps, distinguishing between neoplastic and non-neoplastic lesions of the breasts.^{9,10}

However, FNAC faces limitations in distinguishing between invasive and non-invasive cancer when malignant cells are detected.²² Several factors impact the diagnostic accuracy of breast FNAC, including the skill, experience, preparation, and interpretation of smears. Experience plays a crucial role in enhancing accuracy, and optimal results are achieved when the cytopathologist reading the FNAC also reports histopathology.^{23,24}

Complications of FNAC may include vasovagal reactions, local hematoma, and occasionally, mild discomfort for the patient.²⁵ It's important to note that a definitive diagnosis may not always be possible with FNAC alone, either due to inherent limitations of FNAC or the inability to obtain adequate material. In such cases, FNAC serves as a presumptive diagnosis. Importantly, FNAC is not a replacement for trucut biopsy, open biopsy, or core biopsy.²⁶

AIM & OBJECTIVES

AIM:

- To find out the proportion of various palpable breast lesions as diagnosed by Fine needle aspiration Cytology.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Primary objective**
 - To find out proportion of various palpable breast lesions as diagnosed on FNAC breast.
- **Secondary objective**
 - Age wise distribution of various palpable breast lesion.
 - To evaluate site of distribution of various palpable breast lesion.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study setting: Study was conducted at department of Pathology Dr. SN Medical College and associated hospital, Jodhpur.

Study Period: The study was conducted after approval from Institutional Ethics Committee and was conducted between June 2023 to July 2024 .

Study Design: Prospective and Retrospective observational study

Study Population: All the female patient with palpable lump in breast coming to central lab of hospital associated with Dr. S.N. Medical college for FNAC were included

Inclusion Criteria:

- Females of age group of 15 to 75 year with palpable breast lesion for FNAC were included

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Inadequate sample
2. Heavily blood mixed material
3. Only necrotic material

Sampling Technique-- Bidirectional data collection

Sample Size: Exercise 4

Singlesample proportion $N = Z_1 \cdot$

$\sqrt{P(100-P)}$

E^2

$(1.96)^2 \times 18.5(100-18.5)$

$\frac{\quad}{(5)^2} = 231$

$P = \text{Malignant} = 18.5\%$ as per finding of Babu At Al E =

Absolute error (5%)

Randomization- Not applicable

Blinding- Not applicable

Procedure- Neoplastic lesions were further categorized into benign and non neoplastic pathology .

Reporting of FNAC was according of IAC into five category .

C1: Insufficient material C2:

Benign

C3: Atypical probably benign

C4: Suspicious, probably in situ or invasive carcinoma C5: Malignant

Methodology of data collection and monitoring: After taking permission from HOD and Medical officer in charge labs, the slides were examined. FNAC were reported by two independent pathologists of at least Assistant professor rank. Previously reported cases were reviewed by another pathologist and reported as system proposed by IAC

Flowchart showing plan of action: Not applicable

Standard and Operational Definitions: Not applicable

Statistical Analysis: Data were analyzed by using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 21 where as required.

Ethical consideration & Confidentiality: Breast FNAC were taken by female pathologists in presence of parents, relatives or female laboratory staff as far as possible. Otherwise a female attendant was there. Patient name or other identification will not be revealed. Report was handed over to the patient herself or her authorized relative only.

OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Distribution according to Age

Age group	Number	%
11-20 years	36	15.58
21-30 years	61	26.41
31-40 years	45	19.48
41-50 years	38	16.45
51-60 years	27	11.69
61-70 years	18	7.79
>70 years	6	2.60
Mean \pm SD	37.39 \pm 16.16	

The mean age of cases is 37.39 years with majority are in age group 21-30 years (26.41%) followed by 19.48% in age group 31-40 years, 16.45% in age group

41-50years,11.69%in agegroup51-60years,7.79%in agegroup61-70years and 2.60% in age group >70 years.

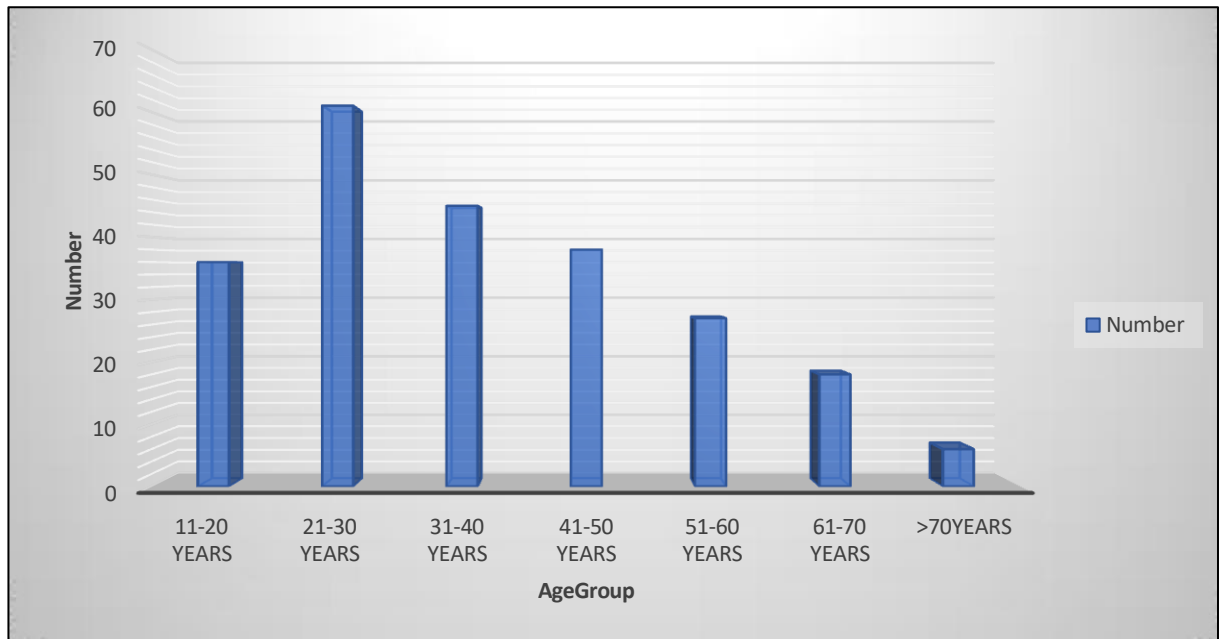


Table2:DistributionofBenignandmalignantaccordingtoage

Agegroup	Benign		Malignant		Other		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
11-20years	34	94.44	2	5.56	0	0.00	36
21-30years	48	78.69	5	8.20	8	13.11	61
31-40years	32	71.11	5	11.11	8	17.78	45
41-50years	17	44.74	15	39.47	6	15.79	38
51-60years	9	33.33	13	48.15	5	18.52	27
61-70years	6	33.33	10	55.56	2	11.11	18
>70years	2	33.33	3	50.00	1	16.67	6

Benign lesions are more common in age group 11-20 years (94.44%) followed by 21-30 years (78.69%) and 71.11% in age group 31-40 years. Malignant lesions are more common in 61-70 years (55.56%) followed by 50% in age group >70 years and 48.15% in age group 51-60 years.

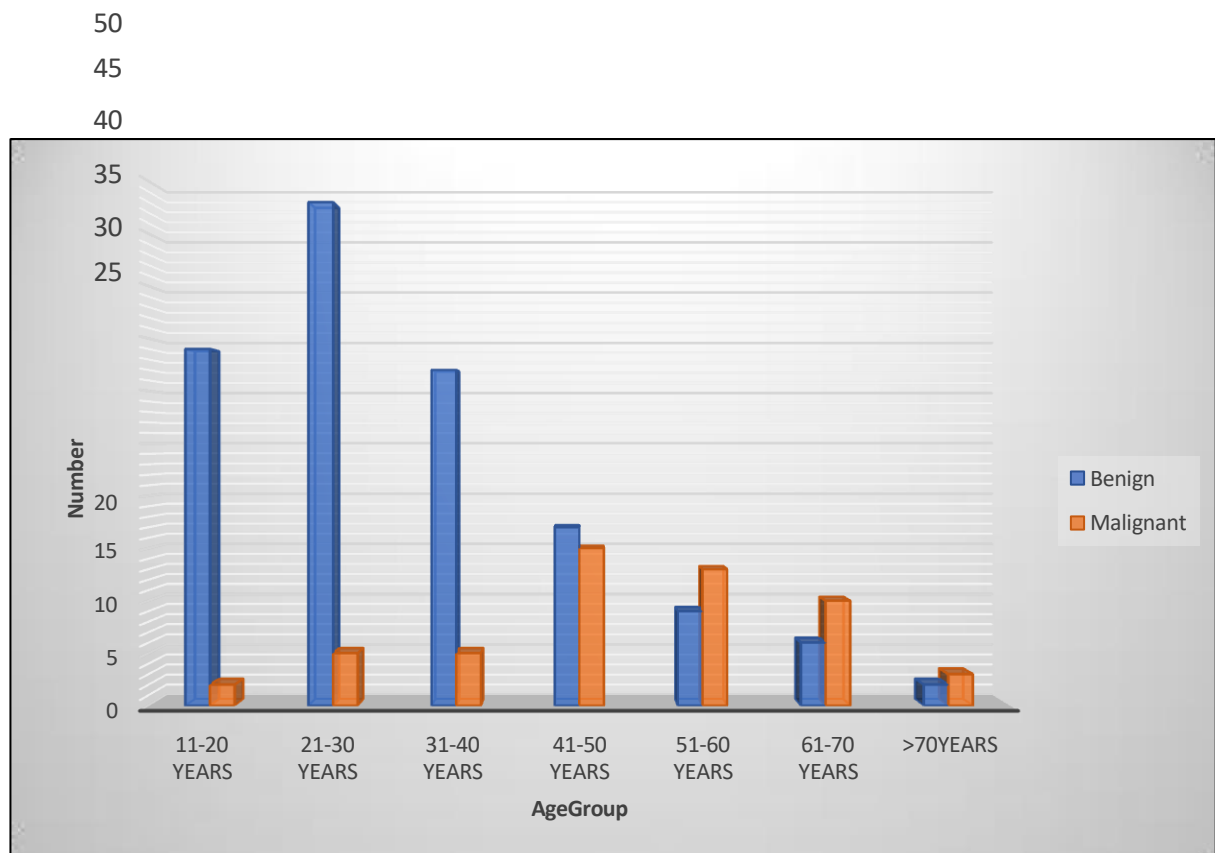


Table3:DistributionaccordingtoSizeofLesion

SizeofLesion	N	%
<1cm	7	3.03
1.1-<2cm	33	14.29
2.1-<3cm	103	44.59
3.1-<4cm	64	27.71
4.1-<5cm	9	3.90
>5cm	15	6.49

According to size of lesion, most common size in between 2.1 cm to less than 3 cm (44.59%) followed by 27.71% cases has size of lesion is between 3.1 cm to less than 4 cm, 14.29% lesions has size between 1.1 cm to less than 2 cm. only 10.39% lesion has size more than 4.1cm.

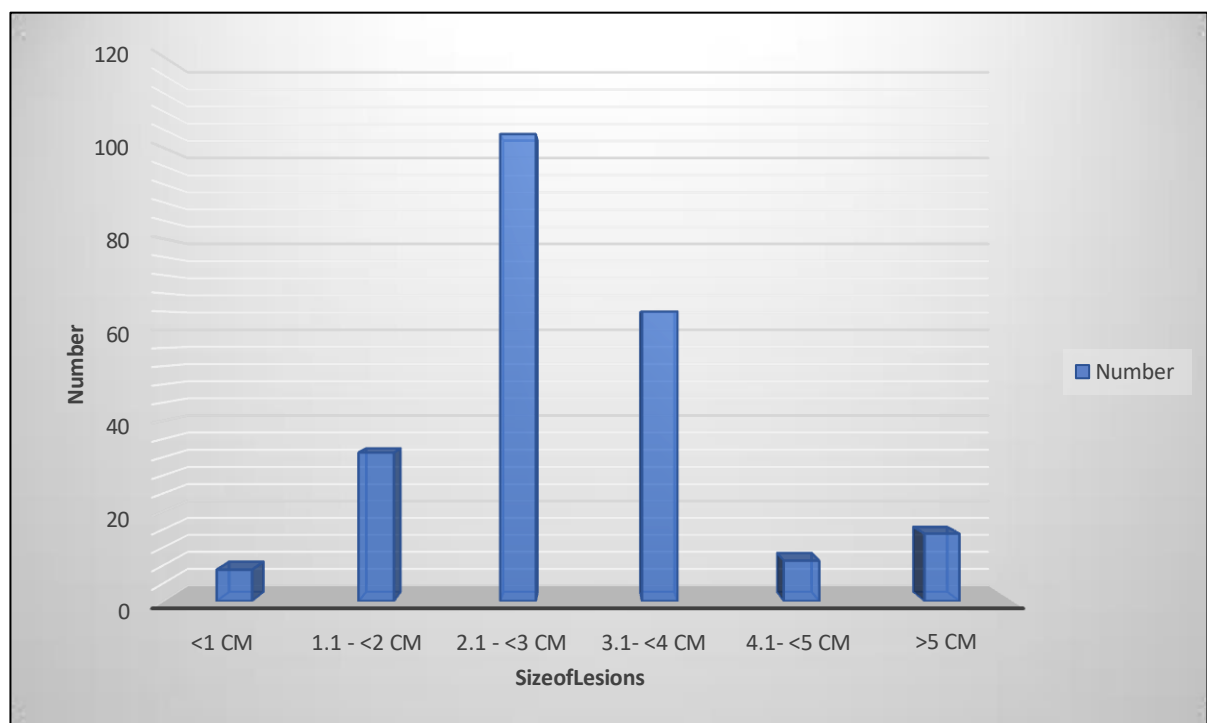


Table4:Distributionaccordingtolocationofbreastlesion

LocationofBreastLesion	N	%
Upper–outer	72	31.17
Lower–outer	28	12.12
Upper–Inner	39	16.88
Lower–Inner	18	7.79
NAC	24	10.39
AllQuadrant	9	3.90
Nipple	3	1.30
UpperOuterAndInnerQuadrant	11	4.76
Retroareolar	13	5.63
UpperOuterAndNAC	4	1.73
UpperAndLowerOuterQuadrant	3	1.30
LowerUpperAndLowerInner	3	1.30
UpperOuter,Left–NAC	1	0.43
Larger-NAC,Smaller-UpperInner	1	0.43
Left-Areola,Right-UpperIn	2	0.87

According to location of breast, most common location is upper outer quadrant (31.17%) followed by 16.88% has upper inner quadrant, 12.12% has lowerouter quadrant and 7.79% has lower inner quadrant.

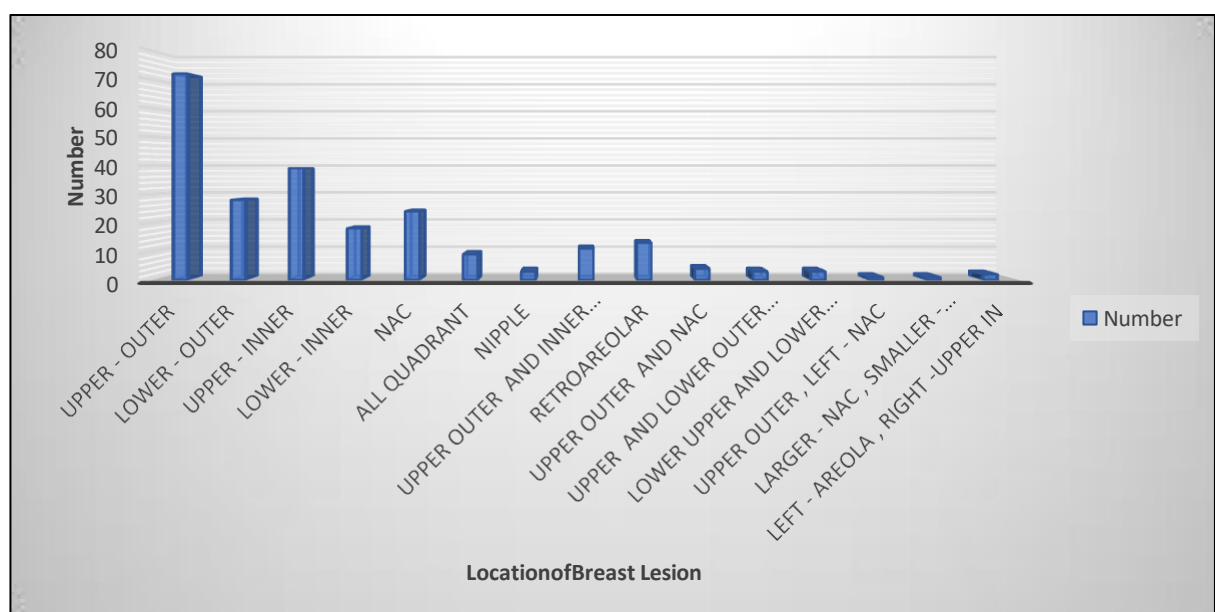


Table5:Distributionaccordingtosite

Unilateral/Bilateral	N	%
Unilateral	224	96.97
Bilateral	7	3.03

Here,unilateralsideismorecommon(96.97%)followedbyonly3.03%has both bilateral breast carcinoma.

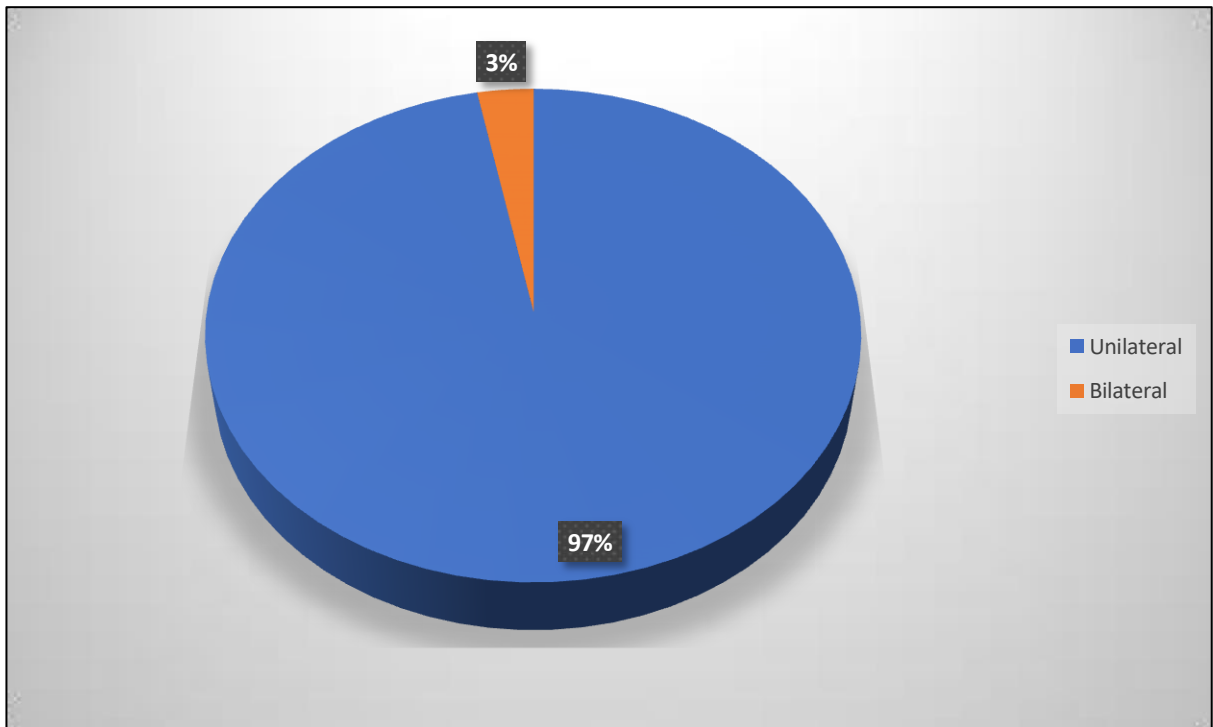


Table6:distributionofcasesaccordingtoC2lesion

C2Lesion	N	%
Galactoceles	1	0.67
Phyllodes	2	1.34
FatNecrosis	8	5.37
FibrocysticLesion	14	9.4
Mastitis	15	10.07
Gynecomastia	18	12.08
Fibroadenoma	91	61.07
Total	149	100

Among benign lesions, most common lesion is Fibroadenoma (61.07%) followed by 9.4% has fibrocystic lesions, 10.7% has Mastitis / Abscess, 12.08% has Gynecomastia, fat necrosis is present in 5.37%, Phyllodes in 1.34% and 0.67% has galactoceles.

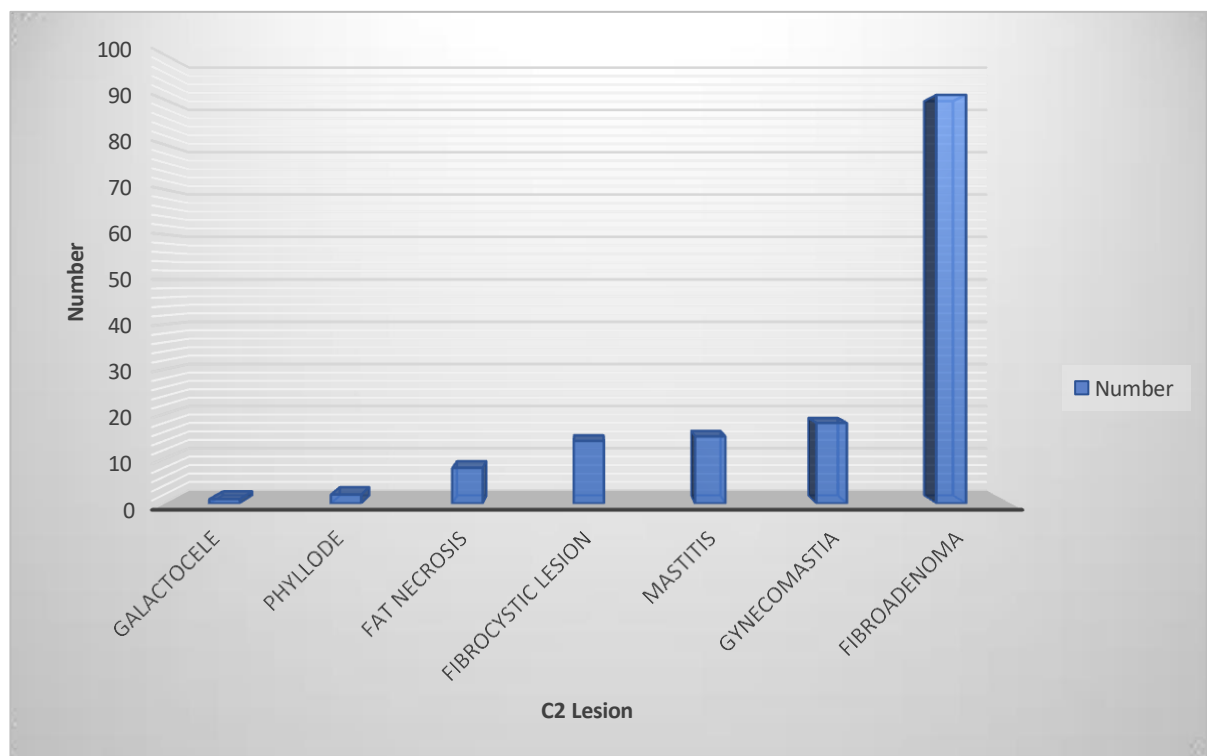
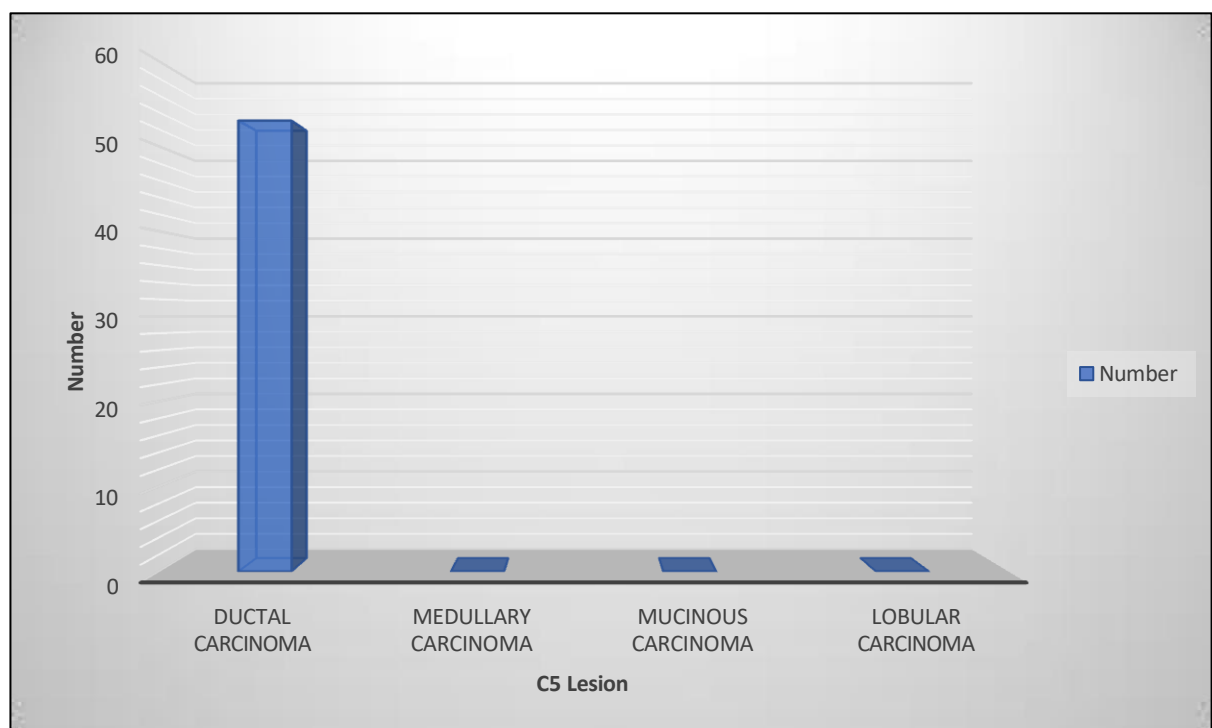


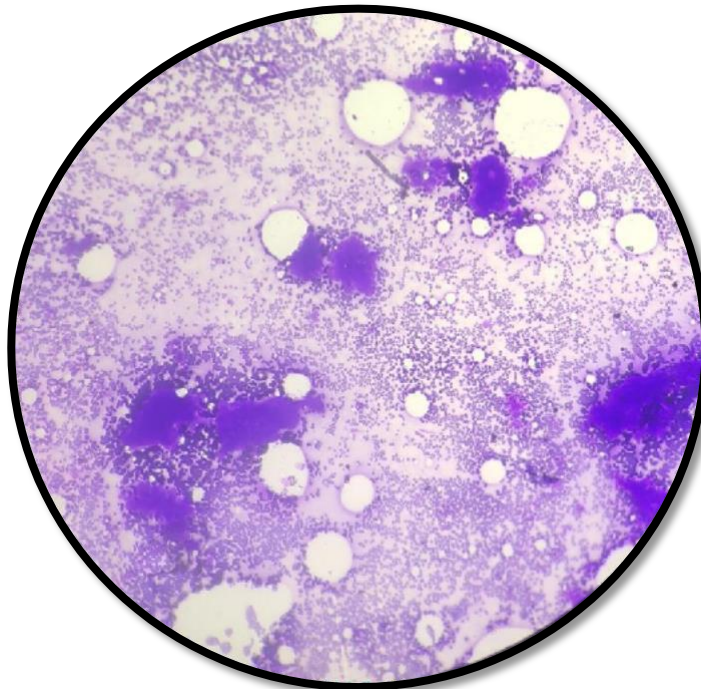
Table7:DistributionofcasesaccordingtoC5lesion

C5Lesion	N	%
Ductalcarcinoma	53	100
Medullary carcinoma	0	0
Mucinous Carcinoma	0	0
Lobularcarcinoma	0	0
Total	53	100

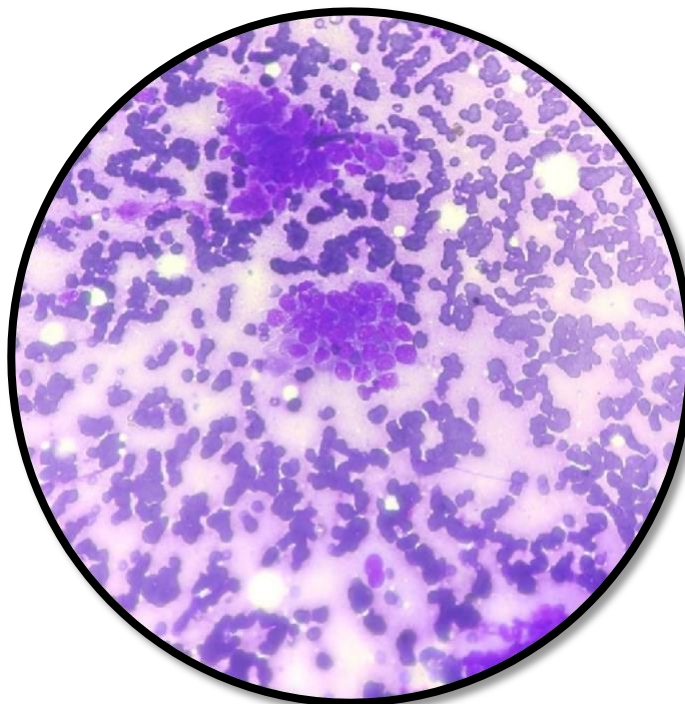
Amongmalignantlesions,mostcommonisductalcarcinoma(100%).



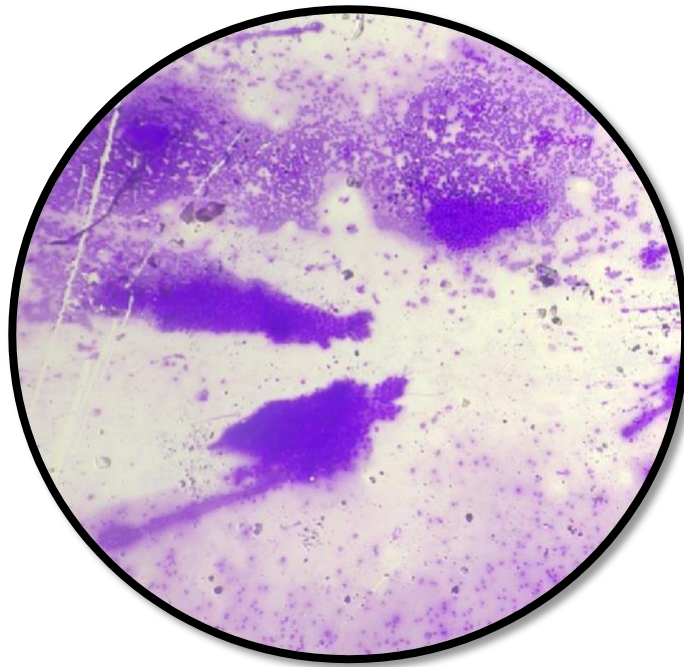
PHOTOGRAPHS



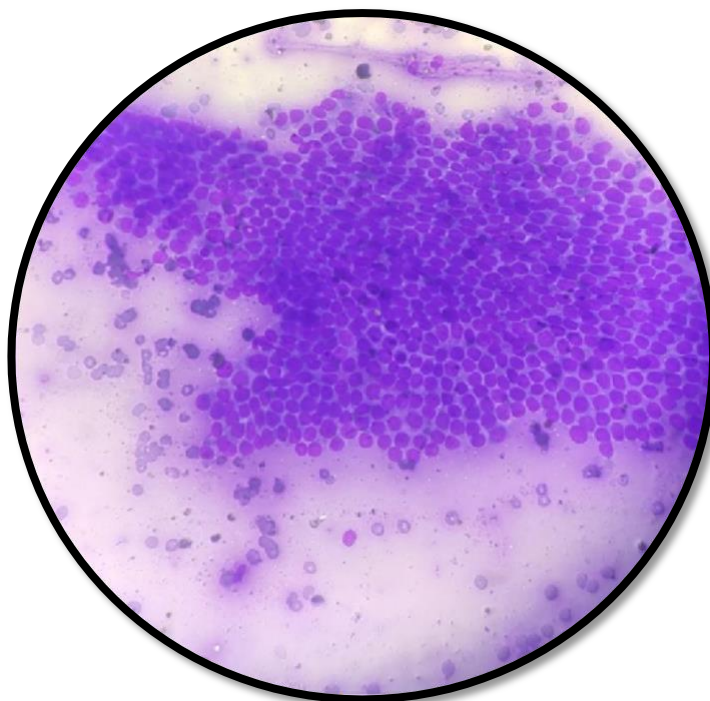
INTRADUCTALCARCINOMA, 10X



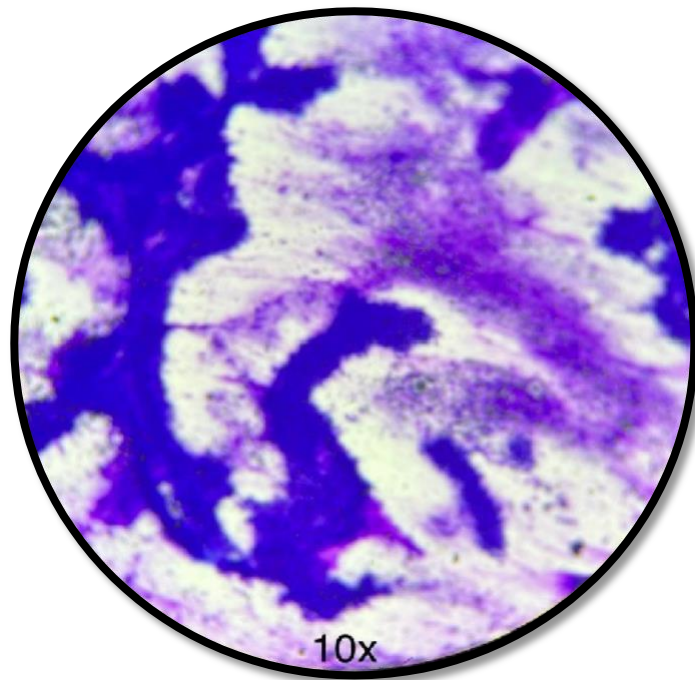
INTRADUCTALCARCINOMA, 40X



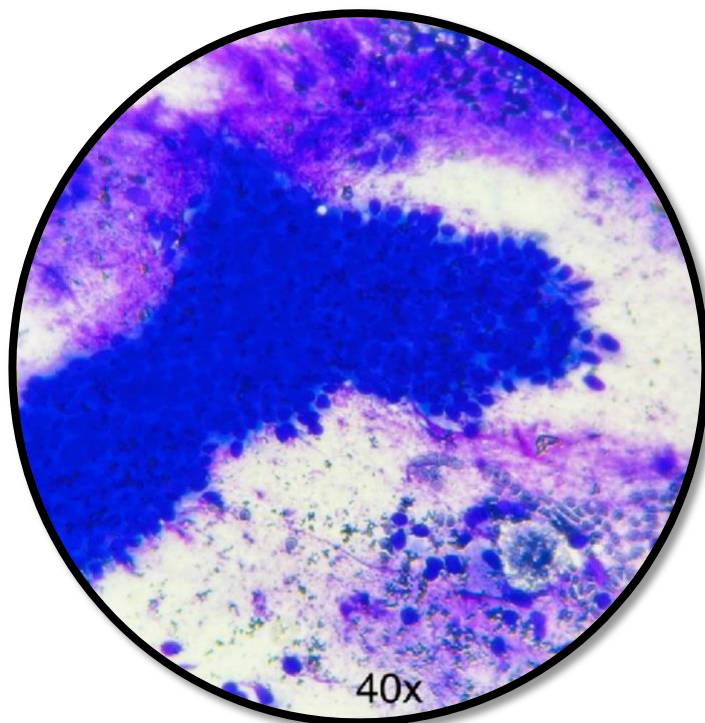
FIBROADENENOMA,10X



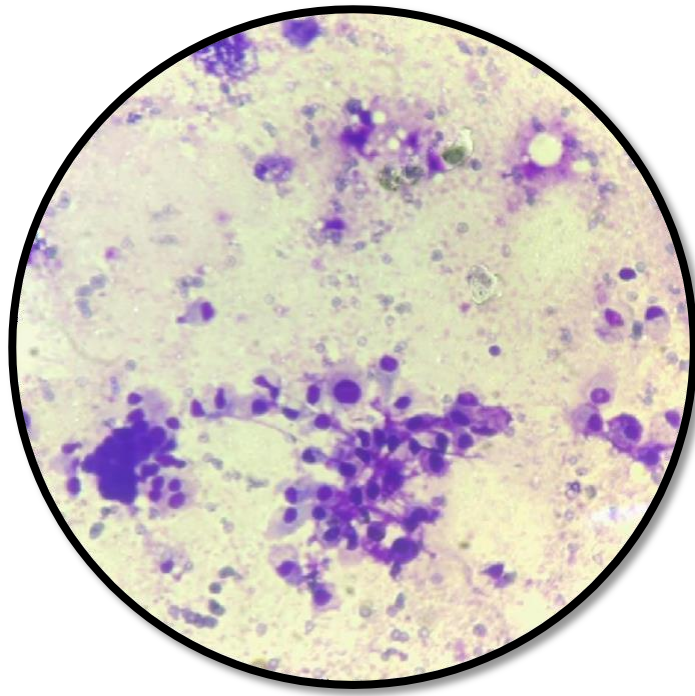
FIBROADENENOMA,40X



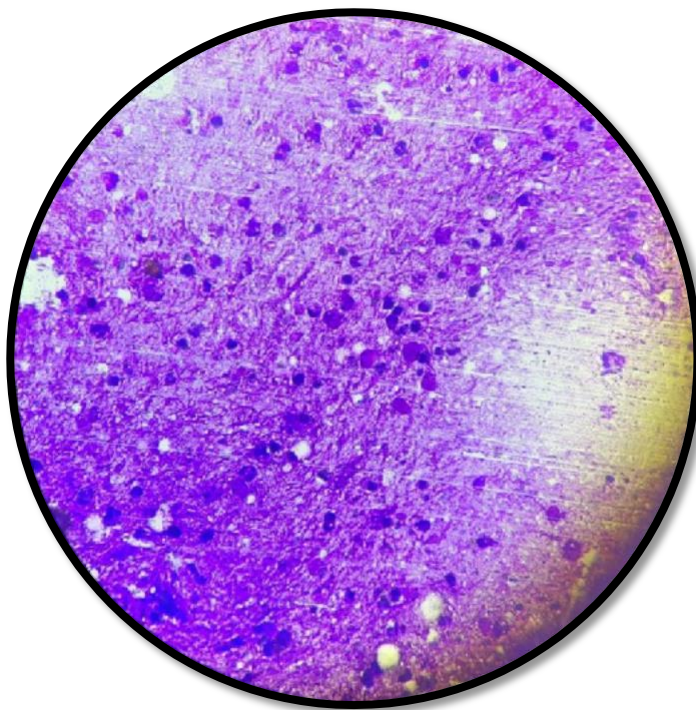
PHYLLODESTUMOR,10X



PHYLLODESTUMOR,40X



FIBROCYSTICDISEASE,40X



DUCTECTASIA, 40X

DISCUSSION

Lump in the breast may be either benign or malignant; however, fear of malignancy is the main reason to compel the patients report to the clinician. Thus, to relieve the stress of the patients, it is necessary to investigate these patients according to standard protocols.⁸³ FNAC is extensively recognized as a reliable procedure for the initial examination of palpable breast masses. It is minimallyinvasive, cost-effective,safe,simple,rapid andsensitiveas compared to biopsy.^{84,85} The main objective of FNAC is to distinguish malignant lesions from benign lesions in order to plan for the treatment protocol and follow-up.

In our study mean age of cases is 37.39 years with majorityare in age group 21- 30 years (26.41%) followed by 19.48% in age group 31-40 years. And, Benign lesionsare more common in age group 11-20 years (94.44%) followed by21-30 years(78.69%)and71.11%in agegroup31-40years.Malignantlesionsare morecommonin61-70years(55.56%)followedby50%in agegroup>70 years and 48.15%in age group 51-60 years. InSharif et al⁶³study age rangedfrom15to60years withmeanageof33.11years. Themostaffectedpatients belongedto 31–35years agegroup (47%) followed bythe agegroup 41–45years (37%).Allthemalignantcaseswereundertheageof22–60years withmean age of 41.48years. The most common age group affected being slowed by theage groups 41–50 and 51–60years (24.39%) each. The patients affected withfibroadenomafallunder16–39yearsofagewithmeanageof21.37yearsand

the most affected (53.57%) patients were under the age of 15–20 years. The most affected patient with acute pyogenic mastitis belonged to 26–30 years age (33.33%) while the majority of the patients affected with tuberculous mastitis were under 21–25 years age (33.3%). Similar findings were reported by **Goyal et al**⁸⁶ who conducted a study in India and found most of the breast cancer patients belong to 15–70 years age. It is found that Age is the strongest risk factor for breast cancer. It is proportional to risk, that is, the older the age, the higher the risk, but chances are increased markedly in postmenopausal years, that is, age >50 years. In **Essiben et al**⁸⁷ study, majority of the cases were between the age of 30–45 years. This indicates that females at their early ages are presenting with breast cancer. In **Vijaya and Sirisha**⁸⁸ study benign lesions of the breast were seen in the age group 17 to 55 years, whereas malignant lesions were observed mostly in the age group 35 to 75 years.

According to size of lesion, most common size is between 2.1 cm to less than 3 cm (44.59%) followed by 27.71% cases has size of lesion is between 3.1 cm to less than 4 cm, 14.29% lesions has size between 1.1 cm to less than 2 cm. only 10.39% lesion has size more than 4.1 cm.

In our study, according to location of breast, most common location is upper outer quadrant (31.17%) followed by 16.88% has upper inner quadrant, 12.12% has lower outer quadrant and 7.79% has lower inner quadrant. And, unilateral side is more common (96.97%) followed by only 3.03% has both bilateral breast carcinoma.

The most common type of lesions are benign (64.50%) followed by 22.51% are Malignant, 8.66% insufficient or inadequate material, 3.46% has suspicious lesion, 0.87% has atypical lesions. And, among benign lesions, most common lesion is Fibroadenoma (61.07%) followed by 9.4% has fibrocystic lesions, 10.7% has Mastitis / Abscess, 12.08% has Gynecomastia, fat necrosis is present in 5.37%, Phyllode in 1.34% and 0.67% has galactocele. And, among malignant lesions, most common is ductal carcinoma (100%).

Comparable to our results, **Sharif et al**⁶³ found that 54% are benign (C2), 2% atypia/suspicious probably benign (C3), 3% suspicious probably malignant (C4), and 41% malignant (C5). Among the benign (C2) cases, 21% were inflammatory and 33% benign. Inadequate/insufficient materials (C1) were not included in the study. Among the total studied cases of breast lesions, FNAC diagnosis of 54% cases was reported as benign and 41% cases as malignant by FNAC. In benign lesions, the

maximum cases were of fibroadenoma (24%) followed by fibrocystic disease (4%), lipoma (3%), while benign phyllodes tumor and galactocoele were only 1% each. Among all these lesions, carcinoma was the most common lesions constituting 41%. **Bukhari et al⁸⁹** also reported 31% malignant cases in their study which agree to our study findings. In Nigeria, similar findings were found by **Egwuonwu et al⁹⁰** and **Mayun et al⁹¹**

who reported 47.3% and 40% malignant lesions in their study patients, respectively. **Ahmed et al⁹²** reported 30.5% cases of malignancy in their study conducted in Sudan. This study results are also consistent with the findings of **Siddiqui et al¹** and **Lakhana and Khalid⁹³** who found breast cancer as the most commonly encountered lesion. In **Vijaya and Sirisha⁸⁸** study Of the 76 benign cases identified by FNAC majority were fibroadenoma -55, followed by fibrocystic disease - 15, suppurative inflammation i.e abscess -4, and phyllodes tumor -1. The cytological spectrum of 10 malignant cases showed that 8 cases were IDC and 1 each of medullary carcinoma and lobular carcinoma.

CONCLUSION

Commonest presenting complains were breast lump with a wide variety of diagnosis. Nearly all patients accidentally found breast lump and were not familiar with breast self-examination. Delay in seeking medical treatment was another noteworthy finding. This study supports that cytological examination using FNAC is economical, rapid, easy and valuable diagnostic tool. It can provide information about the type of lesion which helps in planning the treatment modalities.

LIMITATION
This study has the limitations are:

- Small sample size
- Not including the insufficient material of breast lesions in detailed cytological examination.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CNB	-	Core needle biopsy DCIS	-
		Ductalcarinomainsitu	
FNAC	-	Fine needle aspiration cytology IAC	-
		InternationalAcadamyofcytology	LCIS -
		Lobular carcinoma In situ	
MA	-	Microglandularadenosis NPV	
	-	Negativepredictivevalue OPD	
	-	Out patient department PA	-
		Pleomorphic adenoma	
PASH	-	Pseudoangiomatousstromalhyperplasia PPV	-
		Positive predictive value	
TDLU	-	Terminalductlobularunit UDH	
	-	Usual ductal hyperplasi	