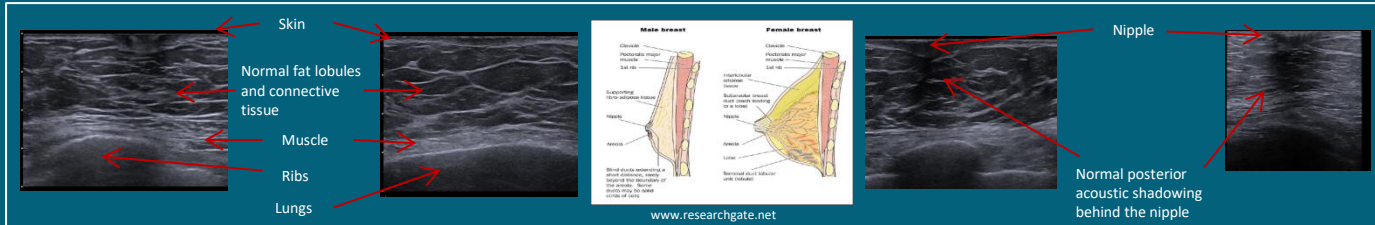


Background

With the increase of awareness of breast symptoms through campaigns and social media, there has been an increase in male patients attending breast clinics with some units having dedicated clinics for male patients. Due to this, it is important to understand male breast anatomy and pathologies that can be diagnosed.

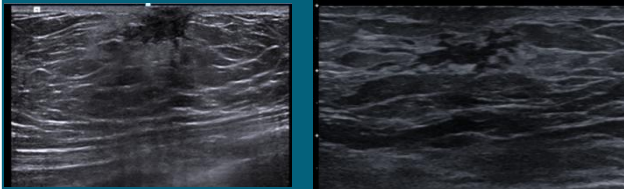
Normal Appearance of the Male Breast



Gynaecomastia

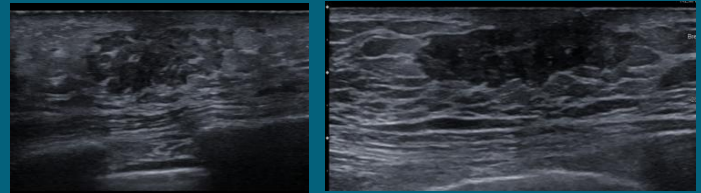
The most common condition that men present with to a breast unit. Account for approximately 40% of all disorders of the male breast. It is a non neoplastic enlargement of the breast which occurs due to an imbalance of oestrogen and testosterone. Results in the enlargement of sub areolar ducts and proliferation of the surrounding stroma. There are three phases – Acute, Intermediate, Chronic. Clinically gynaecomastia presents as breast enlargement, pain within the breast or behind the nipple and change in appearance to skin or nipple. This can be caused by hormone changes, obesity, medications (heart medications, prostate medications), overactive thyroid, kidney disease, Cirrhosis or drug abuse (anabolic steroids and illicit drugs).

Mild Gynaecomastia



Shows as dendritic appearance which is triangular in shape. Hypoechoic area with branches extending into the peripheral adipose tissue "fingers". This should always be sub-areolar.

Florid Gynaecomastia



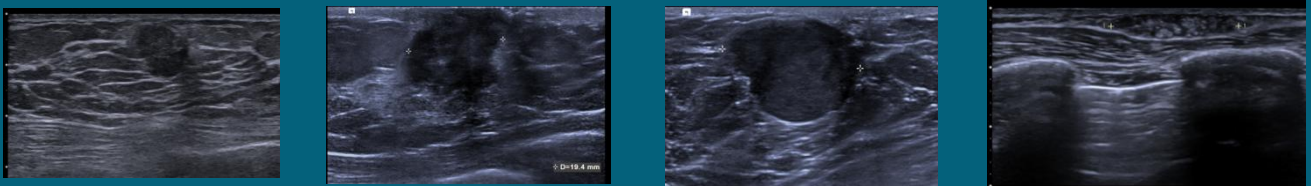
Glandular tissue is diffusely distributed in the surrounding adipose tissue, can resemble the same appearance and female glandular tissue. May also present as a dense hypoechoic mass surrounded by enlarged fat lobules, indicative of florid gynaecomastia with surrounding pseudo-gynaecomastia.

Males Breast Cancer

Around 370 men are diagnosed with breast cancer per year which account for no more than 1% of all breast cancer diagnosed within the UK. The risk factors are similar to that of in women including age, exposure to radiation (radiotherapy), family history, high levels of oestrogen, obesity, liver conditions such as cirrhosis, thyroid problems and Klinefelter's syndrome. The symptoms are a breast lump, nipple discharge, nipple retraction, ulceration on the skin or breast swelling.

Ultrasound appearances

Under ultrasound the appearances are similar to that of carcinomas seen in women being ill-defined, irregular, hypoechoic mass with -posterior acoustic shadowing. It can occur just inferior to the nipple or in the surrounding tissue. But beware appearances can be mistaken as gynaecomastia.



Summary

- Any pathology which occurs in female breasts can occur in male breast.
- Gynaecomastia is the most common presentation in male attending breast clinics.
- If you see a focus of possible glandular gynaecomastia that does not arise for the nipple. Do not ignore it!!
- Always take into account patient age, habitus and medications when determining your diagnosis – things may not be as straight forward as you may think!

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