A rare cause of mastalgia: Dercum’s disease (adiposis dolorosa)

Chiara Trentin1, Brunella Di Nubila1, Enrico Cassano1, and Massimo Bellomi2,3

1Breast Imaging Unit, Department of Radiology, European Institute of Oncology, Milan; 2School of Medicine, University of Milan, Milan; 3Department of Radiology, European Institute of Oncology, Milan, Italy

ABSTRACT

Among the symptoms reported by patients undergoing breast imaging, pain is one of the most common. Mastalgia is generally classified as cyclic, noncyclic, or extramammary. A rare cause of breast pain is Dercum’s disease, or adiposis dolorosa, a condition characterized by multiple, often painful subcutaneous lipomas. Painful breast lipomas have not been described in the literature so far. The diagnosis is made by clinical means supported by diagnostic imaging. We report the case of a 58-year-old postmenopausal woman affected by Dercum’s disease in the breast. Ultrasound examination showed multiple oval, well-defined, hyperechoic lesions suggestive of breast lipomas. No significant features were detected by mammography.

Key words: mastalgia, breast pain, Dercum’s disease, adiposis dolorosa, painful lipomas.

Correspondence to: Chiara Trentin, MD, Breast Imaging Unit, Department of Radiology, European Institute of Oncology, Via Ripamonti 435, 20141 Milan, Italy. Tel +39-02-57489070; fax +39-02-57489040; e-mail chiara.trentin@ieo.it

Received March 30, 2007; accepted July 11, 2007.