Author's response to reviews

Title: The Role of Major Duct Excision in the Detection of Breast Carcinoma.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

We would be grateful if you would consider accepting this manuscript for publication.

As a result of an association between nipple discharge and breast cancer, numerous women undergo diagnostic surgery to rule out serious pathology. With an increase in the rate of preoperative diagnosis of carcinoma in recent years, we hypothesised that major duct excision for the evaluation of nipple discharge alone would result in increasingly low yield of malignancy on excision. Justification of diagnostic excisions in these circumstances becomes increasingly difficult, and emphasises the need for more discriminatory guidelines for these cohort of patients.

In this 14 year study, we demonstrated as little as a 6% rate of malignancy in patients with pathological nipple discharge. We also analysed patients’ preoperative characteristics and found that patients presenting with non bloody discharge appeared to be at particularly low risk, given that none were subsequently diagnosed with carcinoma. We would subsequently recommend that a policy of monitoring these patients is an acceptable approach for surgeons, unless the patient requires symptom relief.

This paper has been seen and approved by all authors and has not been previously published.

Yours Sincerely,

Mary Dillon