Reviewer’s report

Title: Benign proliferative breast diseases among female patients at a sub-Saharan Africa tertiary hospital: A cross sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 8 January 2013

Reviewer: Laura Collins

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Comments:

Major-

1. The sum of the listed benign lesions identified totals 123. Apparently 195 BPBL were found. What are the other 72 lesions?

2. Since the prevalence of BPBL with and without atypia is a point value in this population, it is not clear why there should be 95% CIs reported.

3. The authors should provide references for statements such as impairment of estrogen leading to the development of fibrocystic change and breast lumps and the waning of estrogen explaining the occurrence of atypia in the postmenopausal period.

4. The authors state that "almost all of the benign proliferative lesions were found in the fibrocystic change and the fibroadenoma categories." Does this mean that the 35 BPBLs are a subset of the 111 fibroadenomas and 40 fibrocystic change? If so, there are even more diagnoses not accounted for (see above comments #1).

5. The numbers in the BPBL with and without hormonal therapy are rather too small to be making inferences from this study about the influence of hormones on BPBL.

Minor-

1. The authors should make clear that the diagnoses rendered are largely (or entirely) on FNA samples and not core needle or excisional biopsy samples; this may be a limitation of the study and should be discussed as such.

2. In the discussion, the authors state that atypia is "considered to carry a two fold risk for developing breast cancer". Most of the larger reported series, such as from the Nashville group, the Nurses' Health Study and the Mayo Clinic report a four fold increase in breast cancer risk following a diagnosis of proliferative disease with atypia. References should be cited.

3. The acronym BPBD is easily confused with BPBL and should either be changed or written out in full.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.