

Complicated axillary lymphadenectomy due to a pectoralis quartus muscle

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Abstract

During lymphadenectomy in the left axilla of a 38-year-old woman with a 1.4cm invasive ductal breast carcinoma an accessory muscle was found. Due to the presence of the anomalous muscle the lymphadenectomy was carried out troublesomely through a limited field. Based on its anatomical characteristics, the supernumerary muscle was recognized as the pectoralis quartus. To our knowledge this is the first report of a pectoralis quartus muscle as a surgical finding. The surgeon should be aware of the possible presence of this anomaly as well as its anatomical characteristics in order to avoid any complications.

Key words: surgical oncology, breast cancer, axilla, anatomy, variations, complications

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