

A Better Understanding of Axillary Lymph Node Dissection in the Era of Sentinel Lymph Node Biopsy

Silviu Cristian Voinea^{1,2}, Angela Sandru¹, Cristian Ioan Bordea^{1,2}, Aniela Noditi^{1,2},
Lacramioara Paula Borangic¹, Alexandru Blidaru^{1,2}

¹Department of Surgical Oncology, Institute of Oncology "Prof Dr Alex. Trestioreanu" Bucharest
Romania

²"Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Bucharest, Romania

Abstract

Axillary lymph node dissection (ALND) was and still is an important part of breast cancer treatment despite the fact the sentinel lymph node biopsy (SLNB) has revolutionized breast cancer surgery. SLNB provides the same prognostic information as ALND but with significantly less morbidity. The results of numerous trials conducted over the past 20 years have crowned SLNB as the gold standard for early breast cancer treatment. ALND represents a very standardized intervention with precise landmarks and boundaries. An accurate technique and a good knowledge of axilla' anatomy are mandatory for a correct and complete ALND. But even with a meticulous and careful technique of dissection, a comprehensive ALND may be associated with important morbidity. Nowadays ALND indications are continuously evolving, but the procedure has still an indisputable place in breast cancer treatment.

Key words: axillary lymph node dissection, sentinel lymph node biopsy, breast cancer, anatomy of the axilla