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## THE ASSOCIATION OF TUMOR SIZE AND THE PRESENCE OF LYMPH NODE METASTASES IN BREAST CANCER PATIENTS

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Breast cancer is one of the most common malignant diseases in women worldwide. Since the involvement of axillary lymph node metastases is related to the poor prognosis of these patients, the objective of our study was to investigate the association between breast tumor size and the presence of axillary lymph node metastases. Our research was performed at the Institute of Oncology of Vojvodina in Sremska Kamenica. The study consisted of 72 women diagnosed with breast cancer aged between 29 and 84 years (average age: 59.04±10.87 years) whose breast tumor was surgically removed at the Institute of Oncology of Vojvodina. Patients who received preoperative chemo- or radiotherapy were excluded from the study. The data concerning breast tumor size and the presence of axillary lymph nodes in these women was obtained from the reports of Department of Pathoanatomical Diagnostics of the Institute of Oncology of Vojvodina. The results of our study indicated to positive, statistically significant moderate correlation between the size of breast tumor and the presence of axillary lymph node metastases ( $r=0.32$ ,  $p=0.01$ ). Receiver operating curve (ROC) analysis notified that cut-off value of breast tumor size for the presence of axillary lymph node metastasis was 22.5 mm (AUC=0.70,  $p=0.01$ ). In our investigation, women with breast tumor size of 22.5 mm or larger were predisposed to the presence of axillary lymph node metastases.

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