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The relationship between C-erbB2/neu oncogen overexpression and axillary lymph node metastasis in invasive breast carcinomas

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Resumen

INTRODUCTION: The c-erbB2/neu oncogen codifies the transcription of a transmembrane protein involved in the intrinsecal activity of the tyrosine kinase enzyme which correlates directly with the cellular proliferation. This oncogen is overexpressed in about one third of the breast carcinoma and this overexpression is important in determining the prognosis of epithelial breast neoplasias, although its correlation with lymph node metastasis is uncertain on the literature **GOAL:** to correlate the overexpression of the c-erbB2 oncogen with lymph node metastasis in invasive breast carcinomas **MATERIALS AND METHODS:** A retrospective study of 47 cases was performed by reviewing cases of breast invasive carcinomas from our routine from the years 2002 and 2003 and submitted to setorectomy or mastectomy and axillectomy. This cases were divided into those that had not axillary metastasis (N0, TNM classification, 6th edition, 2002) and those who had at least micrometastasis (N1, N2, N3) and correlated with the c-erbB2 immunohistochemical overexpression (Protein content score: 2+ and 3+) or no expression (0 and 1+) The cases of setorectomy or mastectomy without axillectomy were previously excluded from this study, as well the cases in which immunohistochemistry was not performed, non-invasive breast lesions and cases without clinical data of name, place of origin or age **RESULTS:** In 36 of the 47 cases (76.6%) the c-erb B2/neu oncogen was not overexpressed (0 and 1+), 18 of which had not lymph node metastasis and 18 had it (levels N1, N2 or N3) and only 11 cases (23.4%) overexressed the c-erb B2/neu oncogen (2+ and 3+), 4 of those had not lymph node metastasis and 7 had it **CONCLUSION:** The overexpression of c-erbB2 oncogen had not significant correlation with the occurrence of lymph node metastasis status on our sample although it seems to be correlated positively with the clinical outcome and survivorship of this patients (preliminary data of ongoing prospective study)



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