

Executive summary

Autologous Fat Transfer for Breast Augmentation

(Adapted from the report of the Review Group by Mr A. Chapman)

Background

Fat transfer for cosmetic defects has been experimented with since the beginning of the 20th century, often with mixed results. However, with the recent controversy surrounding silicone breast implants, advocates of fat injection to the breast have argued that this procedure provides a safe method for achieving modest breast augmentation. Doubts remain though as to not only whether the procedure is at all effective, but whether it presents the risk of calcified fat droplets masking the presence of possible breast cancer, with life-threatening implications.

Methods

Electronic databases were systematically searched for references relating to breast augmentation by 1) fat injection, 2) multicentre studies of the saline implant, and/or 3) cohesive silicone gel implants.

Results

No studies comparing fat injection with other techniques for breast augmentation were recovered. Of the 10 fat injection studies retrieved, only 3 were case series, the others being case studies. Only 5 studies were retrieved that reported data on the saline implant, although one of these was a comprehensive review of published data. The very small amount of data available for the fat injection technique suggested that somewhere between 20% - 100% of the injected fat was reabsorbed. There was little data available to assess the procedure's safety and a comparison with saline implants, for which there was considerably larger amounts of data, was not possible.

Conclusion and recommendations

The ASERNIP-S Review Group determined that the evidence base for Autologous Fat Transfer for Breast Augmentation was poor and consequently safety and efficacy could not be determined. The review group further recommended that owing to the lack of evidence regarding patient gain from the procedure of Autologous Fat Transfer for Breast Augmentation, coupled with the theoretical dangers of obscuring carcinoma of the female breast, the ASERNIP-S review group could not endorse the collection of data within Australia for this procedure.

Review group membership

Andrew Chapman – ASERNIP-S researcher
Professor Guy Maddern – ASERNIP-S Director
Mr Colin Moore – Protocol Surgeon
Professor Wayne Morrison – Advisory Surgeon
Mr William Cockburn – Nominated Surgeon
Professor David Watters – Other Specialty Surgeon
Mr Michael Henderson – Invited Surgeon
Dr John Osborne – Invited Radiologist

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Important note The information contained in this report is a distillation of the best available evidence located at the time the searches were completed as stated in the protocol. Please consult with your medical practitioner if you have further questions relating to the information provided, as the clinical context may vary from patient to patient.

For further information about ASERNIP-S

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