

Title: Directional vacuum-assisted (DV) breast biopsy October 1999

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Aim

To assess the safety and effectiveness of the procedure and under what circumstances public funding should be supported for the procedure.

Conclusions and results

Safety DV breast biopsy is safe.

Effectiveness Comparative studies (level III-3 evidence) suggest that compared to core biopsy, DV breast biopsy:

1. has a higher success rate for the removal of microcalcifications;
2. is able to obtain larger numbers of specimens at biopsy; and
3. has increased sensitivity in the detection of ductal carcinoma in situ and atypical ductal hyperplasia.

DV breast biopsy seems to be a more effective diagnostic for non-palpable breast abnormalities.

Cost-effectiveness This was not undertaken. Some items used in DV are more expensive than with core-biopsy.

Recommendations

DV breast biopsy for non-palpable breast lesions should receive higher remuneration than currently available, pending a review of the costs of the procedure.

Method

MSAC conducted a systematic review of medical literature on DV from 1975 until August 1998 using Medline, HealthSTAR and the Cochrane Library databases.