BREAST ABSCESS

AIM

- To ensure appropriate management of the woman with a breast abscess.

BACKGROUND

A breast abscess is a localised collection of pus within the breast. It is a major complication of mastitis. Usually, the woman presents as feeling unwell, feverish, with a localised painful, red swollen area on her breast. The area may also be flocculent. On occasions, the symptoms of fever and redness may have resolved but the woman presents with ongoing breast pain and feeling unwell. The woman will have a recent history of mastitis or breast abscess.

Cause: Unresolved or inadequately treated mastitis.

MANAGEMENT

2. Medical assessment – an ultrasound should be used to diagnose abscess.¹
3. Refer the woman to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital for ultrasound and surgical assessment.
4. Surgical drainage. Repeated aspiration of the abscess under ultrasound can be used as a less invasive alternative to surgery.¹
5. Appropriate antibiotic therapy – see Antibiotic Treatment for Breast Infections
6. Continue breastfeeding. If the breast is very painful or there is an excision near the nipple express using an electric breast pump to drain the breast 2-3 hourly. Ensure the correct sized expressing shield is used.

DISCHARGE PLANNING

2. Arrange breast pump loan if unable to breastfeed.
3. Arrange follow-up at the Breastfeeding Centre.
REFERENCES (STANDARDS)


National Standards – 1- Care provided by the clinical workforce is guided by current best practice
Legislation - Nil
Related Policies - Nil
Other related documents – KEMH Clinical Guidelines: *Mastitis Management in the Home*; *Antibiotic Treatment for Breast Infections*

RESPONSIBILITY

OGCCU / Breastfeeding Centre

Policy Sponsor

Nursing & Midwifery Director OGCCU

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