A 52-year-old woman with a subcutaneous, slightly movable and painless nodule in the left breast

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A 52-year-old woman from Šibenik, Southern Croatia, presented in March 2004 to her clinician with the subcutaneous, slightly movable and painless nodule in the left breast, noticed one month before. The rest of clinical examination was normal and laboratory findings were within normal limits without eosinophilia. She had not travelled abroad in recent years.

Left breast mammography was normal while an ultrasonographic examination showed an oval, well circumscribed hypoechoogenic structure measuring 16x4 mm, located in subcutaneous tissue (Figure 1). The initial diagnosis was inflamed atheroma, and surgical excision of the nodule was performed. On gross examination the specimen was a nodular subcutaneous mass of 1.6 cm in greatest diameter, with a soft yellow-white cut surface. The histological slides were stained with haematoxylin and eosin. Histologically, the nodule was composed of a suppurative centre with a few transverse sections of structure surrounded by a granulomatous inflammatory infiltrate composed of histiocytes admixed with polymorphous leucocytes and lymphocytes (Figures 2, 3).

What is the structure seen in the histological slides?

What is the diagnosis?

Answers on page 414.

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Figure 1. Ultrasonographic picture of the well-circumscribed, hypoechoogenic subcutaneous breast structure.

Figure 2.
Transverse
section of the
subcutaneous
structure,
surrounded by a
granulomatous
inflammatory
reaction (H&E
section, x 40).

Figure 3.
Transverse
section of the
subcutaneous
structure (H&E
section, x 200).