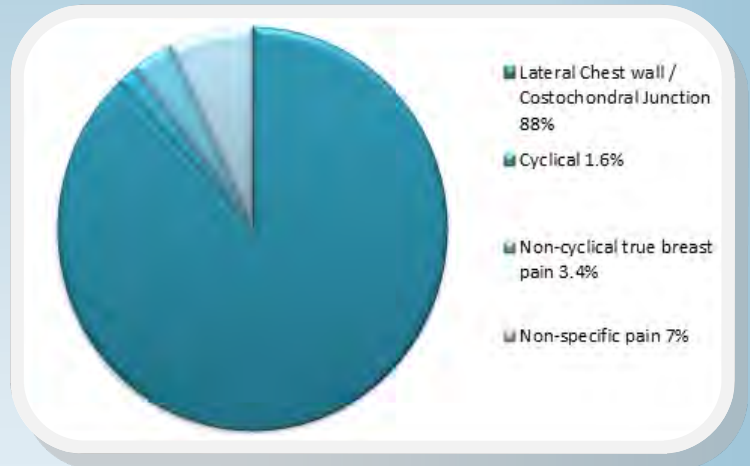


# Breast Pain

## Where is the Pain?

This may seem incredibly obvious! But is the breast pain your patient is reporting truly in the breast tissue? This is a complex area and it is common to find that often breast pain is referred pain from the chest wall. In fact, our audit found that 88% of breast pain referrals were found to be musculoskeletal in origin—not within the breast tissue at all.



### To test for lateral chest wall vs true breast pain:



Ask patient to lie on unaffected side and raise upper most arm above their head. The breast tissue will fall towards the centre of the chest, revealing the chest wall behind.

Press firmly along the chest wall and observe for any pain triggers. These can often elicit a strong pain response!

Cup the breast tissue between two hands and press gently. This is often uncomfortable, but does not produce the same pain they have been experiencing.



# The Causes



**Biggest Culprit!!**

# The Treatment

...Toddlers!!!

## Chest wall / Costochondritis:

- ◆ **Reassure!** - pain not a worrying symptom
- ◆ Treat with **NSAID gel** for 4-6 weeks
- ⇒ Works for all types of breast pain
- ⇒ Includes the **massage** effect
- ⇒ Gives them something to do!
- ⇒ Paracetamol, opiates etc will mask rather than treat
- ◆ **Heat** can offer relief, such as hot water bottle or wheat bag
- ◆ **REST!** Treat as an injury

## True breast pain:

- ◆ Regular simple analgesia and anti-inflammatory gel (for the massage effect) for 6 weeks.
- ◆ **High dose** Oil of Evening Primrose (1g tds) or starflower oil.
- ◆ Consider checking vitamin D levels and supplement as necessary.
- ◆ Ensure wearing an appropriate and supportive bra.
- ◆ Hormonal contraceptive use can be considered.
- ◆ Other complimentary treatments: acupuncture and homeopathy, however their effect is anecdotal, but many women find relief trying non-conventional methods.
- ◆ Pre-menstrual breast pain is often due to increased water retention, so a healthy well balanced diet, weight control and low salt intake may be beneficial, as can supplementing with magnesium and vitamin B6.