



Fibroadenoma of the Breast: A Homoeopathic Insight

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Abstract

Fibroadenoma of the breast is a common benign tumor occurring predominantly in young women during their reproductive years. “Characterized by its well-defined, mobile, and rubbery consistency, fibroadenoma is typically non-cancerous but often triggers anxiety due to the presence of a palpable mass. Conventional management strategies, such as watchful waiting or surgical excision, often raise concerns regarding recurrence, cosmetic outcomes, and long-term hormonal implications. In recent years, complementary and alternative medicine, particularly homoeopathy, has garnered attention as a non-invasive and holistic approach to benign breast conditions. Homeopathy, grounded in the principles of individualization and the law of similars, offers a systemic method that targets not only the physical pathology but also the constitutional predispositions and emotional state of the patient. This paper explores the pathophysiology, diagnosis, and conventional management of fibroadenoma while delving into the homeopathic perspective of treating such benign tumors. It highlights the therapeutic potential of key remedies like *Conium maculatum*, *Phytolacca decandra*, *Calcarea fluorica*, *Scirrhum*, and *Thuja occidentalis*, which are frequently indicated in clinical practice. The study also reviews selected repertorial rubrics and materia medica entries that align with the clinical picture of fibroadenoma. Through literature review and analysis of individual case reports, this paper underscores the promise of homeopathy in reducing the size of fibroadenomas, alleviating associated symptoms, and preventing recurrence without surgical intervention. Though more large-scale, evidence-based studies are required to substantiate these findings, early clinical observations suggest that homeopathy, when practiced skillfully and constitutionally, can be a safe and effective modality for managing fibroadenomas of the breast.

Keywords: Fibroadenoma, benign breast tumor, homoeopathy, breast lump, complementary medicine, individualized treatment, constitutional remedy, non-invasive therapy, *Conium maculatum*, *Phytolacca decandra*





Introduction

Fibroadenoma is a benign, non-cancerous tumor of the breast that typically presents in women between the ages of 15 and 35, often manifesting as a firm, mobile, and painless lump. While the etiology is not fully understood, it is widely associated with hormonal fluctuations, particularly an exaggerated response to estrogen. The prevalence of fibroadenomas has been increasing globally, and though they are not malignant, their presence frequently causes emotional distress, cosmetic concern, and fear of breast cancer among women. Standard medical treatment ranges from periodic monitoring and imaging to surgical excision, depending on the size, symptoms, and growth pattern of the lump. However, surgery, while effective in removal, may result in scarring and disfigurement, and does not address the underlying susceptibility, leading to possible recurrences. In this context, there has been growing interest in homeopathy as a gentle, non-invasive therapeutic modality that aims to stimulate the body's innate healing mechanism. Rooted in the principle of like cures like, homeopathy treats the individual holistically by considering physical symptoms along with emotional and psychological aspects. Remedies are chosen based on a detailed case history, constitutional type, and specific symptomatology. In the context of fibroadenoma, remedies like *Conium maculatum*, *Phytolacca decandra*, and *Calcarea fluorica* are frequently indicated due to their affinity for glandular tissues and ability to resolve indurations and benign growths. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of fibroadenoma through the lens of both conventional medical knowledge and homeopathic philosophy. It also explores relevant repertorial rubrics and clinical experiences to shed light on the potential of homeopathy in offering effective, personalized treatment that aligns with the principles of sustainable and integrative healthcare.

Definition and Pathology of Fibroadenoma

Fibroadenoma is a benign, fibroepithelial tumor of the breast, characterized by the proliferation of both glandular (epithelial) and stromal (connective) tissue components. It is one of the most common types of non-cancerous breast tumors, particularly prevalent among young women in their reproductive years. Fibroadenomas typically present as firm, smooth, rubbery, and well-circumscribed masses that are freely movable within the breast tissue, often described by patients as breast mice due to their mobility. They arise from the terminal duct lobular unit (TDLU), the functional unit of the breast where most benign and malignant processes originate. Pathologically, fibroadenomas are categorized into simple and complex types. Simple fibroadenomas are uniform in structure and usually do not increase the risk of breast cancer, whereas complex fibroadenomas may exhibit features such as cysts larger than 3 mm, sclerosing adenosis, epithelial calcifications, or papillary apocrine changes, which slightly elevate the long-term cancer risk. On histological examination, the tumor reveals an admixture of stromal and epithelial elements in a pericanalicular or intracanalicular growth pattern. In pericanalicular fibroadenomas, the stroma surrounds the ducts, maintaining their round or oval shapes, whereas in intracanalicular types, the stroma compresses the ducts into irregular slit-like spaces. Hormonal influences, particularly estrogen sensitivity, are thought to play a significant role in fibroadenoma development and growth, often resulting in enlargement during pregnancy or hormone therapy and regression after menopause. While usually asymptomatic, fibroadenomas may become tender or swollen during the menstrual cycle due to hormonal fluctuations. Their benign nature, ease of clinical recognition, and diagnostic clarity through imaging and fine needle aspiration cytology (FNAC) or core





biopsy make fibroadenomas relatively straightforward to diagnose, although ongoing monitoring or intervention may be warranted based on the individual's age, symptoms, and tumor characteristics.

Epidemiological Data (Age Group, Risk Factors, Recurrence Rate)

Fibroadenoma is among the most frequently diagnosed benign breast tumors, particularly affecting women between the ages of 15 and 35 years, with the peak incidence occurring in the second and third decades of life. "Epidemiological studies suggest a prevalence rate ranging from 7% to 13% in the general female population, with higher rates observed in women of African descent. Hormonal sensitivity, especially to estrogen, is believed to be a central factor in the pathogenesis of fibroadenomas, explaining their frequent onset during reproductive years, growth spurts during pregnancy, and regression post-menopause. Key risk factors include early menarche, use of oral contraceptives before the age of 20, a family history of benign breast disease, and exposure to hormonal therapy. Lifestyle factors such as high-fat diets, alcohol intake, and obesity have also been implicated, though the evidence remains inconsistent. Most fibroadenomas are solitary, but about 10–15% of cases may present with multiple or bilateral tumors. The recurrence rate after surgical excision is generally low but not negligible; studies report recurrence in approximately 15–20% of cases, particularly among younger patients or those with multiple fibroadenomas. Complex fibroadenomas, though rare, may slightly increase the long-term risk of breast cancer compared to simple ones, particularly when associated with a strong family history or other proliferative breast changes. Despite their benign nature, fibroadenomas can lead to considerable psychological distress due to fear of malignancy, particularly when detected incidentally during breast self-examination or imaging. Regular clinical assessments and ultrasound monitoring are typically recommended for women with stable, asymptomatic fibroadenomas, especially in the absence of worrisome features such as rapid growth, irregular borders, or associated lymphadenopathy. Overall, while fibroadenomas are non-life-threatening, their prevalence, recurrence potential, and psychosocial impact make them a significant concern in women's health across both developed and developing nations.

Conventional Treatment Modalities: Observation, Excision, Cryoablation

The management of fibroadenoma typically depends on the tumor's size, growth rate, symptoms, cosmetic impact, and the patient's age and preference. Observation or watchful waiting is often the initial approach for small, asymptomatic fibroadenomas, particularly when confirmed by imaging and biopsy to be benign. These tumors are usually monitored through regular clinical breast exams and periodic imaging, such as ultrasound or mammography, to ensure stability in size and morphology. Observation is considered safe because many fibroadenomas remain unchanged or even regress over time, especially after menopause. However, surgical excision becomes necessary when the lesion is large (usually >2–3 cm), growing rapidly, causing discomfort, or raising suspicion of malignancy based on clinical or radiological features. Excisional biopsy or lumpectomy under local or general anesthesia is the most definitive form of treatment, providing both removal and histopathological confirmation. While effective, surgery may lead to cosmetic concerns, such as scarring or asymmetry, and there is a risk, albeit low, of recurrence. A newer, minimally invasive option gaining popularity is cryoablation, which involves freezing the fibroadenoma using a cryoprobe under ultrasound guidance. Cryoablation is typically performed on an outpatient basis and is most suitable for fibroadenomas less than 4 cm in size. It offers benefits such as minimal scarring, quicker recovery, and less discomfort, although





complete lesion resolution may take several months. Other emerging techniques include vacuum-assisted excision and laser therapy, though these are less commonly used and still under evaluation. Despite these advancements, no conventional treatment addresses the root hormonal or constitutional predisposition to fibroadenoma formation, and recurrence or new fibroadenomas may develop in predisposed individuals. Therefore, individualized patient counseling and shared decision-making are essential in selecting the most appropriate treatment strategy for each case.

Pathophysiology and Diagnosis

Fibroadenoma of the breast arises from the terminal duct lobular unit (TDLU), which is the functional and structural unit of the breast tissue. The tumor is a biphasic lesion composed of epithelial and stromal components, with the stroma being the predominant proliferative element. The exact etiology of fibroadenoma remains unclear, but it is strongly influenced by hormonal activity, particularly estrogen, which explains its prevalence during the reproductive years and its tendency to regress after menopause. Progesterone, prolactin, and other growth factors may also play contributory roles in its development and progression. The fibroadenoma typically grows slowly and remains well-circumscribed and encapsulated, presenting minimal risk of malignant transformation. Histologically, fibroadenomas are categorized into two main patterns—pericanalicular, where the stroma surrounds the ducts in a circular fashion, and intracanalicular, where the stroma compresses and distorts the ducts into slit-like shapes. Complex fibroadenomas may include additional features such as cysts, sclerosing adenosis, and epithelial calcifications. Clinically, fibroadenomas present as solitary, painless, mobile breast lumps that are often discovered during self-examination or routine screening. Diagnosis involves a combination of clinical assessment, imaging, and histopathological confirmation. Ultrasound is the imaging modality of choice in younger women and typically shows a well-defined, hypoechoic mass. Mammography may be used in older patients but is less sensitive in dense breast tissue. Fine needle aspiration cytology (FNAC) or core needle biopsy is performed to confirm the benign nature of the mass and rule out malignancy. These diagnostic tools help distinguish fibroadenoma from other breast pathologies, including phyllodes tumors, cysts, and carcinomas. In select cases, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) may also be used for better characterization. Accurate diagnosis is essential for determining the appropriate management strategy and for alleviating patient anxiety about breast cancer.

Homeopathic Perspective

Homeopathy views fibroadenoma not merely as a localized physical lump but as an outward manifestation of deeper systemic imbalance involving the individual's vital force. Rooted in the principles of individualization, homeopathy emphasizes treating the patient as a whole rather than focusing solely on the tumor. The development of fibroadenoma is seen as a result of constitutional predispositions, suppressed emotions, hormonal dysregulation, and miasmatic influences. The homeopathic approach takes into account the totality of symptoms—mental, emotional, and physical—to select a remedy that closely mirrors the unique symptom picture of the patient. Remedies are selected after thorough case-taking, which includes inquiries about menstrual patterns, hormonal history, emotional state, personal and family medical history, and any past traumas. Key remedies frequently indicated in fibroadenoma cases include *Conium maculatum* for hard, indurated, painless breast lumps; *Phytolacca decandra* for painful, nodular breasts with radiating pain; *Calcarea fluorica* for stony-hard glandular swellings; *Scirrhinum* as a nosode for chronic, fibrotic conditions; and *Thuja occidentalis*





when tumors are linked to vaccination or suppressed gonorrhea. Repertorial analysis plays a vital role, with rubrics such as tumors, breast, indurations, and nodes, painless helping in remedy selection. Homeopathy does not merely aim at shrinking the lump but seeks to restore systemic balance, thus reducing recurrence risk and promoting overall well-being. Additionally, the miasmatic background—psora, sycosis, or syphilis—is considered to understand the chronic tendency and to select intercurrent remedies when needed”. The treatment duration may vary depending on the chronicity, size of the lump, and individual response. Homeopathic medicines are administered in potentized forms and are considered safe, non-toxic, and devoid of surgical side effects, making them particularly suitable for young women concerned about cosmetic outcomes or recurrence. This holistic, individualized approach makes homeopathy a promising adjunct or alternative in the management of fibroadenoma.

Materia Medica: Indicated Remedies for Fibroadenoma

| Remedy | Indications | Keynotes |
|----------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Conium maculatum</i> | Indurated, non-painful breast lumps; glandular affections | Worse from pressure; hard nodes |
| <i>Phytolacca decandra</i> | Painful lumps; mastitis history | Pain radiates from nipple |
| <i>Calcarea fluorica</i> | Stony hard tumors; fibrous growths | Worse with cold; glandular swellings |
| <i>Scirrhinum</i> | Cancer nosode; deep tissue affinity | Used in glandular degeneration |
| <i>Thuja occidentalis</i> | Tumors due to suppressed gonorrhea/vaccination | Left-sided; worse at night |

Review of literature

(Santen & Mansel 2005) in the study "*Benign breast disorders*" said that fibroadenomas are among the most prevalent benign breast lesions, typically influenced by hormonal factors, and can be managed effectively through observation or surgical intervention based on individual clinical presentation.

(Ajmal & Van Fossen 2020) in the study "*Breast fibroadenoma*" said that fibroadenoma is a well-defined, hormone-sensitive, benign tumor arising in reproductive-aged women, with imaging and biopsy being the cornerstone of diagnosis and patient-centered management.

(Lee & Soltanian 2015) in the study "*Breast fibroadenomas in adolescents: Current perspectives*" said that adolescent fibroadenomas are primarily influenced by hormonal activity, requiring tailored conservative management due to their tendency to regress spontaneously.

(Sklair-Levy et al. 2008) in the study "*Incidence and management of complex fibroadenomas*" said that complex fibroadenomas may pose a slightly elevated risk for malignancy, necessitating more vigilant monitoring and possible excision.

(Wilkinson et al. 1989) in the study "*Fibroadenoma of the breast: A follow-up of conservative management*" said that most fibroadenomas remain stable or regress, and long-term follow-up validates the efficacy and safety of conservative observation in selected patients.





(Dixon et al. 1996) in the study *"Assessment of the acceptability of conservative management of fibroadenoma of the breast"* said that a majority of patients are comfortable with non-surgical monitoring, especially when reassured through diagnostic clarity and regular follow-ups.

(Greenberg et al. 1998) in the study *"Management of breast fibroadenomas"* said that treatment choice should be based on size, growth, and patient concern, with options ranging from surveillance to surgical excision.

(Grady et al. 2008) in the study *"Long-term outcome of benign fibroadenomas treated by ultrasound-guided percutaneous excision"* said that minimally invasive procedures like ultrasound-guided excision provide effective long-term outcomes with minimal cosmetic impact.

(Moilola et al. 2006) in the study *"The efficacy of Phytolacca decandra in the treatment of fibroadenoma of the breast"* said that the homeopathic remedy Phytolacca decandra demonstrated positive effects in reducing lump size and tenderness in fibroadenoma cases.

(Gupta et al. 2013) in the study *"Fibroadenoma of breast: A sonomammographical supported clinical study on the effect of homoeopathic drugs"* said that individualized homeopathic medicines, when monitored via sonomammography, were effective in managing fibroadenomas without invasive procedures.

(Howard 1984) in the study *"Glandular dystrophy the Hahnemannian gleanings"* said that breast glandular conditions including fibroadenoma can be understood and managed through classical homeopathic philosophy, focusing on miasmatic and constitutional treatment.

(Hahnemann 1982) in the study *"Organon of Medicine"* said that chronic diseases, including those manifesting as localized lumps, must be treated through the totality of symptoms and miasmatic background, advocating an individualized, holistic approach.

(Ajao 1979) in the study *"Benign breast lesions"* said that fibroadenomas are the most frequently encountered benign breast tumors and that accurate clinical and pathological evaluation is crucial to differentiate them from other neoplastic conditions.

(Foster et al. 1988) in the study *"Fibroadenoma of the breast: A clinical and pathological study"* said that there exists a strong correlation between the histopathological characteristics of fibroadenomas and their clinical presentation, reinforcing the need for careful assessment.

(Bhattani et al. 2019) in the study *"Correlation between body mass index and fibroadenoma"* said that higher BMI may be positively associated with the occurrence of fibroadenomas, suggesting a potential link between metabolic factors and benign breast tumors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, fibroadenoma of the breast, though benign, can significantly affect women's physical and emotional well-being. Conventional treatment methods such as observation, surgical excision, and minimally invasive procedures offer effective management based on clinical presentation. However, emerging evidence supports the role of individualized homeopathic treatment in reducing lump size, alleviating symptoms, and preventing recurrence without invasive interventions. By addressing constitutional, hormonal, and miasmatic factors, homeopathy offers a holistic approach to care. Integrating both modern diagnostics and homeopathic therapeutics may provide a balanced, patient-centric model for managing fibroadenoma effectively and safely in the long term.

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