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Results of previous studies suggest that a substantial proportion of women with fibromyalgia (FM) experienced a moderate amount of pain during mammography because of breast compression. The main purpose of this study was to evaluate incidence, quality and intensity of pain in FM patients during mammography, using previous administration of EMLA cream over the breast.

Methods:

50 women scheduled for mammography and who fulfilled ACR (1990) criteria for FM were enrolled in the study. 30 – 60 minutes before screening, EMLA[®] cream (2,5 % lidocaine and 2,5 % prilocaine) was applied over both breasts. By means a questionnaire performed in the first 72 h after exploration we evaluated : a) previous painful mammographic experience; b) discomfort with a 6-point discomfort rating scale (DRS); c) intensity of pain (using a 100-mm Visual Analogue Scale - VAS) and, d) correlation between DRS and VAS.

Results:

44 patients answered the questionnaire; mean age was 48,3 +/- 9,1 years. a) 64 % of women experienced previous painful mammography; 95 % of these patients reported actual examination as less painful; b) 80% described exploration with EMLA as comfortable or very comfortable ; c) 8 % of the patients reported VAS > 3, 45 % reported VAS 1 to 3, and 47 % referred VAS = 0; d) VAS and DRS scores suggested strong positive correlation (r=0.89).

Conclusions:

This preliminary results indicates that EMLA[®] cream application over the breast is a simple and effective method to treat pain and discomfort associated with mammography in FM patients.

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