

EP02.02

The Two-Step Strategy in the expectant management of Adnexal Masses

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Objectives: To investigate the possible role of the two-step strategy in expectant management, a possible approach by less experienced operators.

The two-step strategy is defined to assess the risk of malignancy, in which modified BDs are followed by the assessment of different NEoplasias in the adneXa (ADNEX) model when modified BDs are not applicable.

Methods: 256 women with an adnexal mass were prospectively submitted to ultrasound evaluation and proposed for expectant management with long-term follow-up (during 1 year of follow-up) by an expert operator. All masses were also evaluated according to the two-step strategy previously defined.

Results: The mean age of the included patients was 49.4 years with 46.3% of menopausal women. The mean maximum size of the adnexal mass was 38 mm. All these masses were defined as benign by the expert. Benign descriptors were applicable in 161 cases (none had ADNEX >10% risk threshold usually suggested for a safe management) and not applicable in 95 cases. ADNEX model >10% in 18 of these cases, 12 of 18 suspicious by ADNEX were solid tumors, characterized as fibroma by the expert operator.

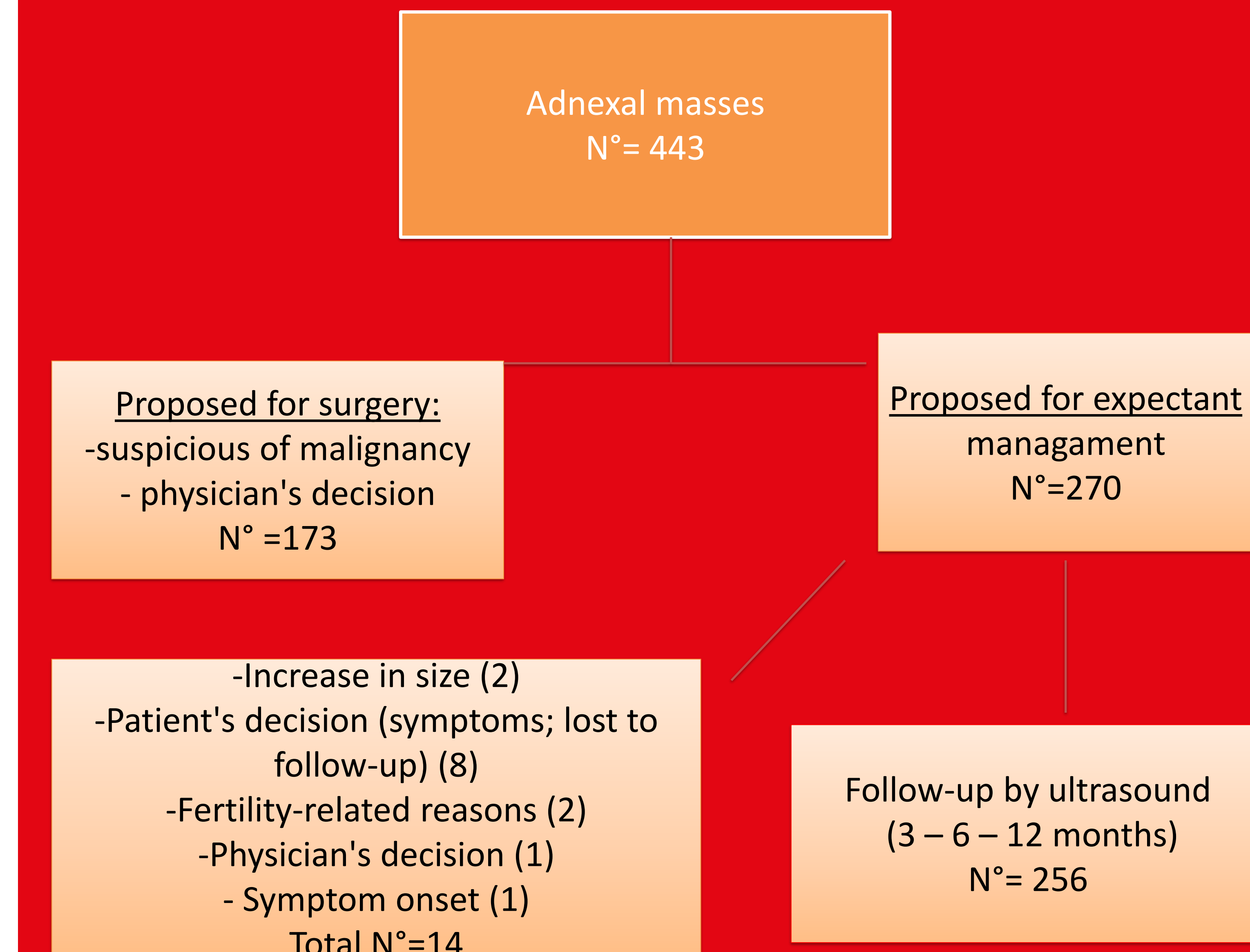


Figure 1 Flow-chart of the study

Conclusion

Assuming that all lesions are benign, the two-step strategy would yield 18 false-positive cases. However, with the 2-step strategy, 18 (presumed benign) cases underwent surgery. According to our data, the 2-step strategy "fails" in 7% of cases that could be managed expectantly according to expert opinion.

Based on the present study, the applicability of the 2-step strategy potentially proposed by less expert operators seems difficult to apply to the expectant management of adnexal masses and should be used with caution.