Practice 2 [1]

**Appropriate** to ensure optimal fixation of breast cancer specimens for accurate pathological examination and biomarker assessment.

**Context**

Pathological assessment of a breast cancer surgical specimen is a critical step in the diagnosis and management of breast cancer. Pathological assessment provides information on the type of breast cancer and its biological features to guide the multidisciplinary team's consideration of appropriate treatment for the individual patient.

The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia has produced detailed guidelines on optimal procedures for tissue fixation. Several studies have shown that suboptimal fixation of breast cancer specimens can result in inaccurate and inconsistent assessment of diagnostic biomarkers such as receptors for oestrogen, progesterone and human epidermal growth factor 2 (HER2), increasing the risks of misdiagnosis.

**Value to patients**

Appropriate handling and preparation of a breast cancer specimen for pathology assessment will help to ensure that patients receive an accurate diagnosis of breast cancer, including the cancer sub-type which is essential to informing appropriate treatment options.

**Supporting evidence**


**Links**
