

32 years of follow-up after double breast reconstruction with silicone implants after a subcutaneous mastectomy

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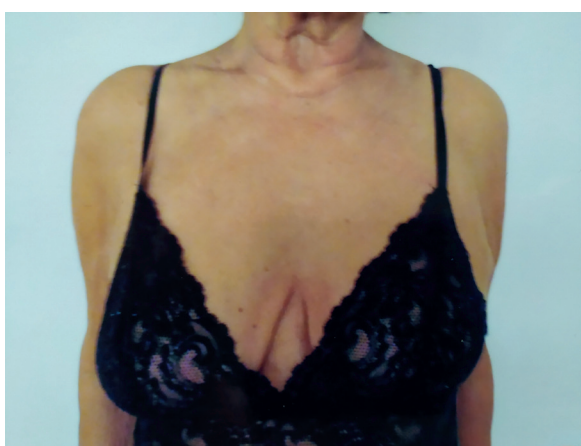


Figure 1. The patient's condition 32 years after the placement of silicone teaching implants sterilised with the radioisotope cobalt-60 in 1988

In 1988, a female patient (year of birth: 1947) reported to me with bilateral fibrotic and cystic lesions of the breasts. Imaging diagnostics and a multiple cytological assessment of the fluid from the cysts were not indicative of cancer lesions, however, severe and prolonged pain and multiple biopsies of the cyst made the patient decide to search for a more definite treatment.

I suggested the possibility of undergoing a bilateral subcutaneous mastectomy with immediate implant reconstruction. In 1988 in Poland, the only method of obtaining implants was to purchase them abroad with foreign currency, something far beyond the financial means of the patient, whilst breast reconstruction surgery was also only in its early stages in the 1980s [1, 2]. That is why I wrote to the implant producer in the United States (Dow Corning Corporation) asking them for assistance. In response, I received a package with a price list and 4 full-value teaching implants, unsterilised (described

as: *Do not implant*). I decided that these could be implanted after sterilisation. Together with radiotherapists, we considered all the available possibilities and we sterilised the prostheses with the use of the radioisotope cobalt-60, which had just been installed in the Radiotherapy Department of the Warsaw Oncology Centre.

On 29th December 1988, I performed a subcutaneous mastectomy from the inframammary fold incision with immediate placement of both implants. The histopathology assessment confirmed the presence of significant fibrotic and cystic lesions. The patient remained under my supervision over the years for follow-ups and was very satisfied with the aesthetic effect. The implants, for 32 years, have not been damaged – despite the passing of time and skiing trauma endured on the anterior side of the patient's chest.

According to the best of my knowledge, this is one of the longest follow-up periods in Poland concerning an uncom-

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plicated placement of silicone implants sterilised with the radioisotope cobalt-60.

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