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Breast Cancer

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Chapter summary

- Breast cancer is the commonest cancer in women. The most common invasive tumour is ductal carcinoma.
- Classification of breast cancer is not only determined by the histological features and stage, but also by the receptor profile.
- Invasive breast cancers are tested for ER and PR, and for HER-2 status.
- The use of hormone receptor inhibitors and Herceptin in HER-2 positive tumours has revolutionized neo-adjuvant and adjuvant treatment of breast cancer.
- Molecular tests for gene expression are increasingly being used to determine the recurrence risk and benefit of chemotherapy in both lymph node negative and low positive nodal status women.
- Molecular tests, especially gene expression profiling, have great potential to refine breast cancer classification, enhance the understanding of the tumour biopsy and improve patient management
- The role of molecular testing is still evolving and the tumour type, grade, staging and receptor status is still of paramount importance in every day diagnostic practice.