

US APPEARANCES OF NODAL METASTASES FROM PAPILLARY THYROID CARCINOMA IN THE LATERAL COMPARTMENTS OF THE NECK

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Background/Purpose: The purpose of this study was to evaluate the sonographic (US) appearances of lymph node metastases from papillary thyroid cancer in the lateral compartments of the neck.

Methods: The clinical data, imaging studies, and fine-needle aspiration (FNA) results of nodal metastases in patients with PTC were retrospectively reviewed. A total of 108 FNA-proven metastatic lymph nodes were evaluated with gray-scale and color/power Doppler imaging.

Results: Important US clues to the metastatic nature of cervical nodes are the presence of cystic areas (17/108, 16%), calcifications (44/108, 41%) on gray-scale US and increased internal extrahilar vascularity on power Doppler imaging (80/108, 74%).

Discussion & Conclusion: The presence of calcifications and/or cystic areas on gray-scale US and disorganized extrahilar vascularity on power Doppler imaging in cervical nodes in a patient with thyroid cancer should make the imager very suspicious and prompt an US-guided FNA.