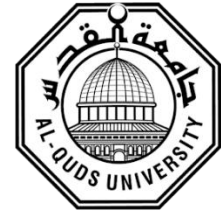




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ABSTRACT

Epidemiology of Incidental Findings in Ultrasound Imaging: Insights from Palestine

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Introduction: The expanding clinical applications of ultrasound (US) imaging have resulted in the increased detection of incidental findings during standard examinations. These findings, unrelated to the primary imaging indication, range from benign anomalies to clinically significant conditions requiring further evaluation.

Research Question and Study Main Objectives: This study represents the first investigation to explore the epidemiological trends of incidentalomas discovered during US in Palestine.

Methods: This multi-center retrospective study reviewed ultrasound (US) examinations performed at Alia, Beit, and Jericho Hospitals between August 1 and September 30, 2024. Excluded cases included breast US reports, US for children younger than six years, and examinations lacking a clear clinical indication. Incidental findings (IFs) were defined as abnormalities unrelated to the primary clinical indication or patient symptoms.

Results: Among 4497 ultrasound reports, 419 incidental findings were identified in 363 patients (8%). IFs affected multiple organ systems, with the liver being the most frequently involved (33.4%). Renal cysts were the most common IF overall (28.6%), showing a significantly higher prevalence in males and older age groups. Additionally, patients with splenomegaly and hepatomegaly were significantly younger than those without these findings.

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Conclusion: Incidental findings are frequently identified during US examinations for various clinical indications. Awareness of the spectrum of these findings could enhance clinical decision-making, reduce unnecessary procedures, and improve resource utilization in the Palestinian healthcare system.

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