

Thyroid Nodule Size Larger Than 4 cm Does Not Increase the Risk of False Negative FNA Cytology or the Risk of Malignancy

In some studies, a false negative (benign) cytology rate of 11% to 20% was found in nodules ≥ 4 cm, leading to concern that all nodules >4 cm should be removed (2-4). However, others have found a false negative result of only 4% in nodules of this size, somewhat lower than the 7% found in this study (5, 6).

The 2009 ATA guidelines recommend that nodules <1 cm not be biopsied unless they have features that

are suspicious for malignancy. On this basis, there is concern about the basis for including group A in this study, even though there were only 35 nodules in this group. Nevertheless, I am reassured by their main conclusion stating that large nodules do not predispose to FNA cytology that is falsely negative.

— Jerome M. Hershman, MD

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continued on next page