Case of the Month—May 2003

Breast Cancer as Incidental Finding

History
A 57-year-old female presented with persistent cough.

Initial Findings
A CT of the thorax showed a left lingular nodule measuring 1.5 cm.

PET Findings
The whole body FDG PET scan found no corresponding FDG uptake and hypermetabolism in the left lingular nodule seen on the CT scan. There was, however, a focus of intense FDG uptake at the inferior margin of the left breast consistent with malignancy. There were also three foci of activity noted in the left axilla consistent with metastasis.

A follow-up biopsy and pathology report confirmed invasive ductile carcinoma of the breast.

How Did PET Help?
An initial chest CT study showed a nodule that did not exhibit FDG uptake on PET. The PET study, however, showed an incidental finding demonstrating an otherwise unknown primary breast cancer that may now be treated. The incidental PET finding was confirmed by follow-up biopsy.

Coronal and oblique projections demonstrate FDG uptake in the breast and axilla (see arrows).