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# Defining Normal Parameters for the Male Nipple-Areola Complex: A Prospective Observational Study and Recommendations for Placement on the Chest Wall

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## Abstract

**Background:** The nipple-areola complex (NAC) is important aesthetically and functionally for both sexes. Methods for positioning the NAC in males are less well established in the literature compared to females but are just as important.

**Objectives:** This study aims to determine the normal parameters for the male NAC, to review literature, and to present a reliable method for preoperative placement.

**Methods:** Normal male patients, with no prior chest wall conditions, were prospectively recruited to participate. General demographics and chest wall dimensions were recorded-sternal notch to nipple (SNND), internipple (IND), anterior axillary folds distances (AFD), NAC, and chest circumference were measured. Comparisons were made using t test and ANOVA.

**Results:** One hundred and fifty-eight patients were recruited (age range, 18-90 years); mostly (86.7%) with normal or overweight BMI. The IND averaged 249.4 mm, the SNND averaged 204.2 mm, and the AFD averaged 383.8 mm. Areola diameter averaged 26.6 mm and for the nipple, 6.9 mm. The IND:AFD ratio was 0.65. There was no statistical difference in the IND:AFD ratio, SNND, or NAC parameters comparing different ethnic groups. The SNND increased with greater BMI ( $P \leq 0.001$ ). Using these data, we suggest ideal NAC dimensions and devised a simple method for positioning of the NAC on the male chest wall.

**Conclusions:** This is the largest study, with the widest range in age and BMI, to date on this topic. Although fewer men than women undergo surgery to the breast, there is a growing awareness for enhancing the appearance of the male chest wall.

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