Ulcer Size and Gastric Cancer

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Dear Sir,

It was with great interest that I read the recent publication by Xu et al. [1], who concluded that 'Ulcer size might be a potential indicator for advanced disease and the use of minimal local treatments must be considered carefully in larger ulcer size patients'. Indeed, the question whether tumor size is a prognostic factor for gastric carcinoma has been raised for years. Some reports showed discordant findings [2]. Recently, Yokota et al. [3] reported that tu-

mor size was clinically a predictor of survival of patients with gastric cancer in case of univariate analysis. However, Yokota et al. [3] further found in multivariate analysis that it was not an independent factor, and the presence of lymph node metastasis, depth of invasion and tumor location were more important than tumor size. In the study of Xu et al. [1], further work using multivariate analysis might give more useful information.

References

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Reply

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Dear Sir,

We extend our appreciation to Prof. Wiwanitkit for his interest in our recent publication. We retrospectively investigated the factors which may influence survival of ulcerative gastric cancer patients, and our result demonstrates that the ulcer size, but not the tumor size, is an independent predictive factor of survival.

Whether or not tumor size is an independent factor for survival in gastric cancer is still controversial. Jun et al. [1] divided gastric cancer patients into 2 groups based on the cutoff value of 3.5 cm in tumor size. Survival was better in the group with a tumor size of <3.5 cm than in the group with a tumor size of >3.5 cm group, and

tumor size was an independent prognostic factor in multivariate analysis [1]. However, other studies showed the contrary results. Yokota et al. [2] analyzed 266 early gastric cancer patients, and their study showed that tumor size was not an independent predictor for survival. Two years later, the same authors reported 697 cases, and tu-

tumor size was associated with patient survival in univariate analysis, however, it was not a predictor of survival in multivariate analysis [3]. The same result was also found in a study by Shen et al. [4]; tumor size was not associated with the long-term survival of gastric cancer patients with stage I and II diseases. Our present study, as well as the above-mentioned studies, showed that tumor size was not a predictor of survival in ulcerative gastric cancer patients. This discordant result of the relationship between tumor size and patient survival may be influenced by the study differences in gastric cancer stage, mean tumor size, number of patients, etc.

In our study, only patients with ulcerative gastric cancer were enrolled for analysis. Ulcer size was found to be related to the patient's survival in univariate analysis, and this result may be confounded by other related variables including tumor size, depth of invasion and cancer stage. Further analysis using the Cox regression model revealed that ulcer size was one of the independent factors for survival in patients with ulcerative gastric cancer; however, we agree that this result was based on a relatively small number of patients analyzed, and must be guaranteed by a large scale data analysis.

References

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